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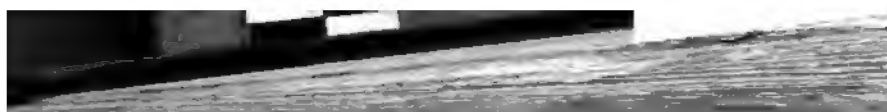


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LIFE AND TIMES
OF
STEIN,
OR
GERMANY AND PRUSSIA
IN THE
NAPOLEONIC AGE.

BY
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VOLUME II.



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My sentence is for open war ; of wiles
More unexpert I boast not : them let those
Contrive who need or when they need, not now.

MILTON.

CHAPTER I.

THE SPANISH REVOLUTION.

WE are now arrived at the point in Napoleon's career which in a historical tragedy founded on the story of his life would make the natural commencement of the Fourth Act. We may suppose the first two acts of such a play to be occupied with his rise to supreme power, and the second to close with the Peace of Lunéville. The hero is left as First Consul in possession of the great conquest of the Revolution, the Left Bank of the Rhine, and holding the proudest position ever occupied by a man of the people at the age of thirty-two. The third act would bring us to the Peace of Tilsit, and leave him still in the enjoyment of the same unprecedented prosperity, but an object now of universal alarm, having brought to an end the Empire, humbled Austria, and crushed the army of Frederick. By this time the spectator is brought into the state of mind suitable to tragedy; he is full of troubled astonishment and misgivings about the ways of Providence. And now the fourth

act when it begins shows still further advances in the hero's power and success; but these excite wonder no more, for partly that passion is exhausted and partly it was evident that power raised so high could not fail by a kind of momentum to rise much higher; the absorbing question now is to conjecture what point Destiny has reserved, where is the vulnerable heel, or what circumstance, probably insignificant at first sight, can convert a series of good fortune so long and uniform into a tragedy. We have arrived now at the very moment when the thwarting power for the first time visibly intervenes, and some of the most anxious spectators see with a thrill of joy their long suspense relieved, the fatal uniformity of bad fortune broken; when here and there a few venture to say that they see now what Providence was aiming at, and can once more believe in a Providence; when a few, and Stein among them, begin to understand not only that Napoleon will fall, but also how he will fall.

In such a historical play as we have imagined, the second act ending with Lunéville would exhibit Napoleon restoring the throne of Louis XIV., and the third act would show him reviving that of Charlemagne. Lunéville places him at the head of a restored French monarchy with an extended frontier; Tilsit secures him in the headship of a Western Empire which showed by the side of Russia like that of Charlemagne by the side of the Byzantine Empire. The fourth act sees him leaving all precedent behind, but at the same time it gradually brings to light an obstacle which he proved unable to turn or remove.

A new formula was wanted in this period, which should do what in the third period had been done by the conception of reviving the Empire of Charlemagne. The name of Charlemagne had helped men to grow accustomed to think of France, Germany and Italy as united under one ruler; the object now was to lead them to think of the whole Continent as united in the same way. The natural antithesis to the Continent was England, and so 'War against England,' or 'the Continental System,' became the watchword of this fourth period. By putting adhesion to this system into all his treaties Napoleon now acquired a certain footing of authority within every state including even Russia. Everywhere this system gave him a right to interfere with the internal affairs of government. The States which have given their adhesion to the Continental Blockade form a sort of wider Confederation of the Rhine, and by his right of enforcing this blockade Napoleon is now in all Europe what before as Protector of the Confederation he had been in Germany.

Thus was England called to contend, as it were, on equal terms against the whole Continent. It was the first plain indication given to the whole world of the approach of a period in which the old states of Europe would take up a secondary position compared to great Empires extending into the other Continents. England, Russia and the United States are now all alike Powers belonging to a higher scale of magnitude than the greatest purely European states. In that age it was England alone that stood out in this way, and to no one

was this view more familiar than to Napoleon. His Egyptian expedition had shown long before how little he limited his views to a European supremacy, and how jealously he regarded the Asiatic conquests of England. His formula of War against England was none the less seriously meant because it had also the indirect advantage of uniting the whole Continent under his ascendancy. But it was not England as a European State that he sought to rival or crush, but England as a World Empire. The failure of the Egyptian expedition and the destruction of the French fleet had for some time obliged him to abandon these designs and confine himself to aggressions upon Germany, but after Tilsit he returned to them with new hope. It was in his power to furnish himself with new weapons against England. He could replace the lost fleets of France by those of the minor maritime Powers whom he could now force into war with England; he could take more complete possession and control of the fleets, such as that of Spain, which had already assisted him; and there was a third way by which he could at once enter into rivalry with England, if not take precedence of her, in the extra-European world. France had failed as a colonising Power, but the Napoleonic Empire was no longer France and was under no necessity of putting up with the colonial insignificance of France. It was nearly equivalent to Western Europe, and Western Europe taken together was greatly superior to England in colonies. Spain and Portugal between them possessed almost the whole of Southern and Central America, an Empire compared to which

that of England was both in extent and natural wealth insignificant. What now lay between this vast Empire and Napoleon? It could be conquered, so he might think, without the trouble of crossing the Atlantic; it could be conquered in Spain and Portugal themselves. Spain was already an ally completely subservient, a client state as humble as Bavaria, while Portugal, as the ancient ally of England, might be attacked with little ceremony, and was so weak that it could no more resist than any one of those numerous German or Italian states, such as Brunswick, Hanover, Electoral Hessen, Sardinia, Venice, or Naples, which had already suffered partition, annexation, or whatever lot France found it most expedient to consign them to.

These considerations enable us to understand the course taken by Napoleon at the beginning of this his fourth period, that is, in the months following the Peace of Tilsit, the months measuring the earlier half of Stein's ministry. His objects are to get possession of the fleet of Denmark, to annex or partition Portugal, and to get complete control of Spain.

The critical question for him was what form of control to establish over Spain. Spain had been but lately one of the Great Powers, and to usurp such a complete possession of her government as Napoleon had in view was a more serious undertaking than if she had been on a level with the minor German or Italian States. Much risk would have been avoided if he could have treated Spain as he treated, for example, Bavaria; if he could have given her the position of an honoured ally sharing his glory and

his gains, receiving for instance a principal share in the spoils of Portugal, as Bavaria did in those of Austria, on condition of placing her army and navy completely at his disposal. By this plan it may seem he would have reaped at once the principal advantages to be gained by the possession of Spain, and by slow degrees he would have gained all that he could possibly desire, and seen Spain gradually merge her independence and distinctness in the greatness of her ally. When such an easy course was open to him, why did Napoleon adopt a totally different one? Why did he treat Spain as an enemy rather than as an ally, and try to control her not as Bavaria, but as the territories conquered from Prussia and Hannover and Electoral Hessen, which he erected into the Kingdom of Westphalia under one of his brothers? Why did he insist upon setting up a Bonaparte in Spain also, and that not by the right of the stronger after conquering the country, but while the country was still unconquered and by an act of outrageous violence and treachery?

It was not only a great mistake, but the great mistake of Napoleon's life; it was the very mistake for which all his enemies had long been eagerly waiting. That it was this, and that the consequences of it affected all Europe, and Prussia among other states very speedily, is my reason for making it so prominent here. But it is also a reason why we should take peculiar pains to understand how Napoleon came to commit it. It is with the *blunder*, of course, not with the *crime* that we are concerned. In its monstrous lawlessness the act is only of a

piece with the whole foreign policy which Napoleon inherited from the Revolution. But it was a great miscalculation made by a very accurate reckoner, and the danger here, as in Napoleon's other mistakes, is of our putting up with the childish quasi-poetical explanation furnished by the heathen proverb of 'Quem Deus volt perdere,' &c. His conduct here was no doubt Napoleonic, but it will not be found that there was anything of infatuation in it, or that he simply indulged in a freak of omnipotence. He took a course such as might have been expected of him, and such as he had found successful before, and if he made a fatal mistake it was not because an infallible judgment slumbered for a moment, but because his judgment was fallible; not from a momentary aberration but from a want of sagacity. What was it then in politics that Napoleon did not know and could not understand?

I have pointed out how vastly important the possession of Spain was to Napoleon, as carrying with it a sort of hegemony in the New World. There were other considerations which tempted him not less. First, the ships and sailors which Spain could furnish were of most essential importance in the maritime war with England, and would remain as a great acquisition even if he failed in getting possession of the colonies along with the mother country. Secondly, the displacement of the ruling house in Spain would be a final blow given to the House of Bourbon, and we know with what persistence Napoleon always pursued the design of rooting out the dynasty to whose place he had succeeded in France. Thirdly, it would give an

opportunity of repairing a serious loss which France had suffered through her Revolution, the loss of the ascendancy of her ruling house over the kindred ruling house of Spain. It was true that France had scarcely as yet felt the loss, and that the miserable Spanish Government had ever since 1795 been as subservient to France as it could have been if France had still been ruled by a Bourbon. But this might not last; in particular, since a new king mounted the Spanish throne after the Revolt of Aranjuez in February, 1808, Napoleon might have reason to fear the defection of Spain from his policy; and in any case, he who had risen so far beyond Louis XIV. in other respects might naturally desire to have the same ascendancy in Spain which Louis XIV. had enjoyed, or would at least be strongly tempted by an opportunity of acquiring it so remarkable as that which now offered.

Now these considerations urged him to deviate from the policy he had pursued towards the minor States of Germany. Substantial ascendancy might suffice him in his relation to Bavaria or Würtemberg, but the case was different in Spain, where the sovereign was a Bourbon. There his views required the actual expulsion of the Bourbon and the substitution of a Bonaparte in his place. But it is to be added that Napoleon had tried for several years the plan of treating Spain as he treated his vassal States in Germany, and that it did not answer. He had long used the fleets of Spain at his pleasure. But the misgovernment of Spain was such that he derived little advantage from its subservience. Its debt had increased in the twenty years of Charles IV.'s reign



by five thousand millions of reals, the interest of which now swallowed up more than a third of the revenue. The fleet, which under Charles III. had consisted of 76 ships of the line and 51 frigates, had sunk to 33 ships of the line and 20 frigates, which moreover were in such a condition that only six ships of the line and four frigates could put to sea. In the hands of Godoy government had sunk into such neglect that the new Ministers who surrounded Ferdinand after Godoy's fall could not find in the public offices any information about the state of the establishments! The alliance of such a country could be of little use to Napoleon, even though its dependence were as complete as that of the humblest member of the Confederation of the Rhine. What he wanted was the complete control of its resources.

What then should hinder Napoleon, whose army in this year 1808 stood at 900,000 men, from disposing as he pleased of a neighbouring State, which had allowed its army to sink into utter dissolution? It may be thought that if not morality yet the necessity of paying some respect to public opinion would deter Napoleon from the extreme of violence and perfidy to which he proceeded at Bayonne, and that his utter disregard of appearances marks the beginning of a mental intoxication. Of his many usurpations this was the most daring; he was now putting out his hand to take possession of an empire, of a large part of the planet, of all that remained of the dominion of Charles V.; surely policy demanded that the lawlessness of the act should be veiled under all the decencies that could be invented. This

is true, but yet it is to be remembered that this act may have seemed to Napoleon likely to strike mankind as so eminently useful and beneficial, that they would readily forgive a certain peremptoriness and rude irregularity in the mode of performing it. That was an age of international lawlessness, and the revolutionary school that Napoleon represented took a kind of pleasure in breaches of moral obligation that could be represented as tending to the general good. 'La petite morale est l'ennemie de la grande,' the favourite maxim of Mirabeau, was also that of the whole revolutionary school. Napoleon had often cynically and impudently abused it, but in this particular instance his conduct has a right to all the benefit it can derive from whatever plausibility the maxim may have. If it is enough to allege in defence of any action that it will do a great deal of good, which of course it is not, then this particular act was more defensible than most acts of Napoleon's. It seems to have been all along his calculation that the reform of abuses in government would be a sufficient atonement to public opinion for all the usurpations he might desire to commit. In short, it was his political secret to disguise the conqueror under the reformer. Now in his whole life he never saw a fairer opportunity of doing this than now in Spain. There was no dispute about the corruption of the Spanish Government; there was no question that it was the worst government then existing, and the evil was the more intolerable because the country was so great and had under the last king held so high a position. There could be no doubt that Napoleon would in a

short time revive in Spain agriculture and commerce, restore the finances, break the yoke of the noblesse and church, and introduce all the enlightenment which had hitherto failed to penetrate the country. He would be a reformer like Charles III., but infinitely more efficient, because his reforms would be supported by the power and reputation of the French empire, instead of depending upon the favourable opinion of the Spanish population itself. It might almost seem that for States so lost as Spain then was there is no possible redemption but through deliverers like Napoleon, and that a Spanish patriot of that time might have paraphrased a well-known saying, and said, that for the good of Spain, 'if Napoleon had not existed it would have been necessary to invent him.'

If then the usurpation which Napoleon contemplated was great, no less striking was the justification of it on revolutionary principles. And when we see how very lenient history has been to Napoleon in consideration of the abuses he swept away, we may well think that had he been successful in Spain not so much would have been heard of the proceedings at Bayonne. A vast State restored to order and prosperity would have been held a sufficient atonement for a few lies, for a treason which in other circumstances would no doubt have seemed black, and for not more than two thousand lives sacrificed in putting down the riot at Madrid. Even the reckless indecency of the proceeding might have been excused on account of the miserable character of the victims. It might have been argued that when the meanest and most contemptible of men and women are found

seated in the place of supreme authority and playing with the happiness of a great nation, one can scarcely use too little ceremony in bundling them out.

Thus perhaps the whole enterprise would have looked, if it had been sanctioned by that Power whose counter-signature Napoleon was in the habit of taking for granted, Fortune. It would then have appeared not as an imprudence into which the intoxication of unbounded power betrayed him, but as one of the most characteristic strokes of that policy which so singularly united audacity with craft and at the same time national ambition with professions of cosmopolitanism. Since it failed, and failed in such a way as to change the whole character of the European conflict and ultimately to undo the conqueror's whole work, we can see nothing in it but insensate rashness as well as shameless wickedness. But yet the error in Napoleon's calculation was one which he could hardly be expected to see, and which was not seen at once even by those who had the greatest interest in his failure. Spanish patriots like Urquizo, who had fathomed Napoleon's plans with the utmost penetration and had warned Ferdinand of what was in store for him, believed when the blow was once struck that there was no remedy, and were prepared to put up with and make the best of a Napoleonic Government. In what then precisely did the error consist?

It consisted evidently in leaving out of account the Spanish people. But yet in Germany and Italy since the beginning of the wars the wishes of the people had been slighted with perfect safety. What was there then to lead Napoleon to foresee that the

Spaniards would rally round their Government any more than the Neapolitans, the Piedmontese, the Hessians, and many others had done?

There is a well-known letter, purporting to have been written by Napoleon to Murat on the eve of his entrance into Madrid, from which it would appear that nevertheless he did for a moment see his mistake, and had a clear presentiment of all that was to follow. I do not pause here to discuss this letter; the original of it does not exist; it is entirely inconsistent with all the other letters written by Napoleon to Murat about the same date, and it was certainly never received by Murat. Though there is little doubt that Napoleon wrote it, yet he must have either forged it at a later time to save his reputation for sagacity—which is M. Lanfrey's view—or, as M. Thiers thinks, he wrote it under a passing impression received from a conversation held with a certain M. Tournon, who had been travelling in Spain and had been greatly struck with the peculiarity of the Spanish character; but being immediately afterwards reassured by good news from Murat, suppressed it. I refer to it here because it describes the difference between the Spaniards and other nations in a phrase which has repeatedly been quoted as felicitous. 'You have to do,' writes Napoleon, 'with a new people; it has all the courage and will have all the enthusiasm which is found in men who *have not been exhausted by political passions*.' But does the phrase really remove the difficulty? It occurred naturally to Napoleon because it marks the difference between Spain and France, where the exhaustion caused by the Revolution made, as he was well aware, Napo-

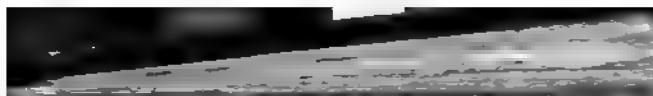
leon's absolutism possible. It is perhaps also applicable to Holland, where the violence of the party-strife between the Patriots and the Orangists had given the country as a prey to France. But it does not mark how Spain differed from the other states in which the conqueror had met with no opposition. Even Belgium, though torn by political passions, could hardly be said to be exhausted by them when she submitted to France. She was rather in the first ardour of political passion, as indeed Spain was, for political passions were strong enough in Spain when Napoleon interfered. But let us think of Italy, of the minor states of Germany, of Prussia herself. Napoleon had set up and pulled down governments at his pleasure in all parts of Italy, and he had thrown several German states together to make up the Kingdom of Westphalia. In all these cases he had met with no resistance from the people, and, what is more to our present purpose, in humbling and partitioning Prussia he had had to overcome the Government and the army but not the people. Was this because in Italy, Germany and Prussia the people were exhausted by political passions? On the contrary, in this respect these countries were in just the same condition as Spain itself. They were 'new countries'; political passions were entirely unknown to them, for all political affairs were entirely out of the province and foreign to the thoughts of all except the official class. Napoleon's neat phrase therefore leaves us still to seek for an explanation of that peculiarity of Spain which disturbed his calculations.

Between Spain and this class of states there

was one very obvious difference. Spain was Spain, but those Italian and German states were not Italy and Germany, but only *in* Italy and Germany. How momentous this difference is we do not now require to be told; it is the peculiar political lesson of the nineteenth century. But it was not dreamt of in Napoleon's political science that the state which is also a nation is an organism far surpassing in vigour and vitality the state which is only a state. So long as a state is merely a machinery by which a number of men protect their common interests, it will break down when the machinery ceases to work well, or it will readily and without objection suffer the substitution of better machinery. Such had been the states with which Napoleon had hitherto dealt. There was no clear reason why the territory of Electoral Hessen, Hannover, Brunswick and a part of Prussia should not be united to form one state, for there had been no reason founded in the nature of things why those territories had hitherto been divided. But there are other ties which bind men in societies besides accidental aggregation or even common interest. One of these Napoleon had considered a good deal. He recognized and used with much skill the uniting power of a common religion. With his mathematical turn he had tried to find the Mechanical Equivalent of Catholicism, and had been heard to say that the Pope's influence was equal to an army of 40,000 men. But there are other such forces as potent even as religion, and, what is more, these forces may act in combination. Being distinct from interest or utility, it is evident that they cannot cease to operate merely because

they do not serve interest and utility; in other words, that it will be of no avail to tell a society held together by these forces that their system is a bad one, or that they would be better off under another system.

Such an argument Napoleon could urge with undeniable truth to the Spaniards. But it ran off them like water, because their union was not a system at all and did not exist to make them well off; it was an intense instinctive life. By this I mean that besides a common interest they were held together by two other ties of supreme force. The first was religion; a religion fierce, ignorant, intolerant, but for that very reason the more opposed to Napoleon's interests. To his Manifesto, which began 'Napoleon, by the Grace of God, Emperor of the French, King of Italy, Protector of the Confederation of the Rhine,' the earliest pamphlet of the Rebellion answers, 'Yes! Napoleon, that is, Napodragon, Apollyon, Ruler of the Abyss, King of the monsters of hell, Heretics and heretic Princes, Abominable Beast, Protector, Head and Soul of the Confederation of the Rhine, that is, of the Seven Heads and Ten Horns of the Beast which bear blasphemies against Jesus Christ and his Church, against God and the Saints. That is the body of the Beast, and Napoleon is the head!' To the promise, 'I will bring you the blessings of Reform,' is answered, 'You will bring us a Calvinist Reform, to introduce the innovations of the Protestants, as your Ministers, Senators, &c., are mostly of this sect or else apostates, atheists and Jews...' This may serve as a specimen of the fierceness of their reli-



gious chauvinism. Perhaps Napoleon was prepared for this. But the other principle of cohesion was new to him, and the full power of it had never been so plainly exhibited in modern Europe before.

The German States, I have said, were only *in* Germany, but the Spanish State was Spain; the state and the nation were in a manner convertible terms; this is as much as to say that all the feelings of kinship or clanship were in Spain enlisted in the defence of the Government, whereas in Germany the same feelings had no relation whatever to the Government. These feelings of clanship are much stronger in some countries than in others, and genuine Highland clannishness is in most countries very weak. But on a larger scale the same feeling shows itself again with much more uniform power. For what is the nation itself but a large clan? Englishman is bound to Englishman not merely as member of the same state or as professing the same religion, but also by a sense of kinship as inheriting the same character, as showing a family likeness, and most of all as speaking the same language. The conspicuous badge of language keeps alive among very large societies of men a sense of kinship like that which unites single families.

Athens and early Rome show us that patriotism may be strong in communities not clearly distinguished by race or language from those around them. But though patriotism may be strong without a sharply-cut nationality, it is evident that nationality will operate very strongly to strengthen patriotism. In truth in those ancient states the other narrower form of clannishness took, at least

for a very long time, the place of nationality. And the small German state in which neither form was found, still more the petty and artificial principalities of Italy, would evidently belong to the least firmly united class of states. Whatever sense of kinship there is between German and German, and this probably was even then much though it was in a latent state, their common language, their common property in Luther's Bible, their common triumph at Rosbach, their common pride in the new German learning, the new German literature, the new German philosophy; all this had no effect in strengthening the basis of any German state, all this was thrown completely away in the war with Napoleon. Precisely the contrary in Spain; here all was effective, all was turned into military force. The intense clannishness of a people separated by mountains and seas from other states, the pride of ancient victory and empire, the common memory of a crusade of a thousand years, all this in belonging to the nation belonged also and belonged completely to the state.

The result of this was that when the Spanish Government in its corruption and feebleness was entirely unable to resist Napoleon, it was discovered that no such consequences followed as in Italy and Germany. When the state fell to pieces the nation held together and proceeded to put forth out of its own vitality a new form of state. When the work seemed to Napoleon finished it was found to be barely commenced; when he had surmounted all the obstacles he had foreseen, another obstacle presented itself which he had never imagined. This

obstacle was not only insurmountable, but in its total effect it proved fatal to Napoleon's Empire.

As much as this may be said without adopting the vague doctrine of those who suppose that mere self-devotion will supply the place of national government or military discipline. The rising in Spain was easily controlled when Napoleon appeared; the insurgents suffered disastrous defeats; they showed miserable incapacity both in the council and in the field; if the French armies were in the end driven across the Pyrenees this was done by the discipline of English troops and the skill of an English general, and not by Spanish enthusiasm. But though all this is true, the effect produced by Spanish enthusiasm in all its reckless wildness was incalculable, and makes this rebellion stand out as the greatest European event which had happened since the French Revolution, and the beginning of a new and grand chapter in European history.

Not to mention that the first defeats of the French, the disaster of Baylen, and the flight of Joseph came from the insurgents themselves and not from their English auxiliaries, not to mention again that the English would never have undertaken the rescue of Spain if they had not been seized with admiration of Spanish heroism, nor probably would have persevered in it without the persistency of Spanish patriotism; let us consider only the terrible blow inflicted on Napoleon by the mere fact of the rebellion. His calculations had broken down; he had reckoned without his host; he had made a blunder of the first importance; and the infamy of Bayonne stood out unredeemed by

success. But besides this his actual power had suffered the most serious diminution. For many years he had counted the force of Spain as part of his own. It was inefficient no doubt, but, such as it was, he had it. The Spanish fleet had fought with the French at Trafalgar; Spanish troops were serving him in Denmark when the Spanish troubles began. With tact and patience he might have improved this into a valuable possession and gained much assistance from Spain in his German and Russian wars. But with the Rebellion Spain passed over at once to the other side. All she had to give was lost, and she became an object of enormous expense and trouble. We may be impressed by the easy and complete triumph of Napoleon at the end of 1808, but let us not overlook how much his power has fallen since the year before. Now he holds down Spain with 300,000 men, but then he held her down just as completely, and in truth was passionately worshipped by her population, without any force at all. There can be no greater mistake than to regard this rebellion as a temporary disturbance, which but for the interference of England would not have been serious. Its mere occurrence, without regard to its consequences, was a most damaging blow to Napoleon, the visible commencement of his decline, and the greatest disaster that had befallen him since the failure of the Egyptian expedition.

How much more serious was the prospect to him when this Rebellion began to have its triumphs, its strokes of good fortune! On the 21st of July General Dupont with nearly 18,000 French soldiers



surrendered to the insurgents; on the 31st the French evacuated Madrid and began their retreat to the Ebro. These were disasters which not only betokened that the whole Spanish enterprise would fail, but must have seemed to many like a turn in the tide of fortune, like the beginning of Napoleon's fall, particularly as they coincided in time with Junot's disaster in Portugal. Soon it was found necessary to withdraw the army of occupation from Prussia, and that meeting of the two Emperors at Erfurt which has been so often celebrated as the highest point of Napoleon's fortune, appears evidently, when we consider the circumstances, to have been his way of dissipating the impression produced by the ominous change in his affairs.

Such was the direct result of this rebellion. Soon, no doubt, the weak side of it was seen; soon it was plain that the Spaniards who could venture and sacrifice so much for their country could not plan the campaigns or win the victories which were necessary for its redemption. On Dec. 4th of the same year the French entered Madrid again led by Napoleon himself, and the whole movement might seem to be at an end. But had this really proved to be the case, the loss to Napoleon as we have estimated it would have remained, and there would have remained also the indirect influence of the Rebellion in other countries. The world had received the very lesson which it needed. Statesmen everywhere who were digesting defeat, such as Stein and Scharnhorst in Prussia, or Stadion and the Archduke Charles in Austria, or those who were dreading it, such as the Emperor Alexander, received a new revela-

tion from what passed in Spain. That the Spaniards had failed was nothing; their total want of discipline, organisation and enlightenment, accounted for this; and all these resources other countries and especially Prussia had. Prussia indeed by depending on these alone had fallen with unexpected disgrace; Spain, entirely destitute of them, had fallen also, but with unexpected honour. It was evident that 'the one thing needful' was found, and a new idea took possession of the mind of Europe. That idea was not democracy or liberty; how could Spain have had anything to tell about either of these? it was nationality. It was the idea of the nation as distinguished from the state; the union by blood as distinguished from the union by interest; the idea of the strength and stubborn solidity of that society, which, while it has the form of a state, is a nation also, and of the feebleness of that which is only a state, which can appeal to no inbred instincts, no natural affections, however complete its administrative machinery may be.

Accordingly here begins the second period of the Napoleonic age. The Spanish Rebellion opens a series of wars, which resemble it and each other, and resemble no wars which had been waged in Europe for a long time before. They are the wars of nations and no longer of states. Such was the Austrian war of 1809; it was national everywhere, as I shall point out, and not merely in the Tyrol. Such was the Russian war of 1812, such the Prussian in 1813, 1814, 1815. They resemble each other also in another respect, namely, that except in the war of 1809 Napoleon is now uniformly



overcome. Great mismanagement and want of good leadership gave him one more triumph in 1809, but between 1812 and 1815 he suffered four overthrows, each of which was more complete and ruinous than had been suffered till then by any modern general. So potent was the new instrument which Spain had put into the hands of statesmen.

The new doctrine did not cease to be important with the peace. The middle part of this century has been principally devoted to the remodelling of Italy and Germany on the basis of nationality, and to reducing to system the *levée en masse* of Spain, and at this moment the doctrine is causing the rearrangement of the east of Europe. It has been no less important in literature, and particularly in historical literature, than in politics.

In the life of Stein it is the grand occurrence which falling in the very midst of his ministry divides it into two dissimilar parts. The forced abdication of Charles and Ferdinand at Bayonne took place in the first week of May. Even before the news of it arrived the storm was rising in Spain, and by the end of the month the unparalleled insurrection was in full course. On the 25th the mountain province of Asturias solemnly declared war against Napoleon, that is, against a sovereign whose army was more than twice as large as their whole population! Valencia and Murcia were up even earlier. A single week sufficed to raise the whole country 'from the Cantabrian Sea to the Bay of Cadiz and from the Mediterranean to the Ocean¹.' Without concert and without calculation,

¹ Baumgarten, *Geschichte Spaniens*.

almost before the news had time to reach them, they flung back an injury done to their nationality though it came wrapped up in the most reasonable arguments and the most alluring promises; while in Germany the same injury, excused by nothing and aggravated by every form of oppression, was borne with scarcely any resistance, scarcely even any sign of unwillingness, for years. The beginnings of this great European event were watched by Stein from Berlin while he was engaged in negotiating with Daru; we can imagine with what feelings! His cause had been, since his ministry began, substantially the same as that of Spain; but he had perhaps understood it himself but dimly, at any rate hoped but faintly to see it prosper. But now he ripens at once into a great nationality statesman; the reforms of Prussia begin at once to take a more military stamp, and to point more decisively to a great uprising of the German race against the foreign oppressor.

The change of feeling which took place in Prussia after the beginning of the Spanish troubles is very clearly marked in Stein's autobiography. After describing the negotiations at Paris and Berlin, which were glanced at in the last chapter, he begins a new paragraph thus :

‘The popular war which had broken out in Spain and was attended with good success, had heightened the irritation of the inhabitants of the Prussian State caused by the humiliation they had suffered. All thirsted for revenge; plans of insurrection, which aimed at exterminating the French scattered about the country, were arranged; among



others, one was to be carried out at Berlin, and I had the greatest trouble to keep the leaders, who confided their intentions to me, from a premature outbreak. We all watched the progress of the Spanish war and the commencement of the Austrian, for the preparations of that Power had not remained a secret; expectation was strained to the highest point; pains were necessary to moderate the excited eagerness for resistance in order to profit by it in more favourable circumstances. It was with this feeling that the members of the Military Commission, Colonels Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, and Major Grolmann went on with the preparatory military arrangements. Colberg was strengthened to maintain the maritime communication with England; brave officers were chosen to be commandants of corps; all the slothful, lukewarm, or evil-disposed, all who were content with servitude, were dismissed; at the head of whom stood Field-Marshal Kalkreuth, author of the unhappy Peace of Basel (Tilsit!), an able and experienced soldier, but crafty, ambitious, envious, and paralysed by the routine of old age and the domination of a malicious and grasping wife. This party was joined by all the men of pleasure and fashion, *e.g.* Prince Hatzfeld, all Jews, here and there a narrow-minded country squire, all the selfish men of office and red tape, with several learned sophists, and as far as they could they favoured adhesion to France.

‘To the great mass of the nation this thought was intolerable, the incubus of the French garrisons, of marchings through the country, indescribable provocations, kept alive its hatred of the French,

and powerful support might be counted upon. Fichte's Addresses to the Germans, delivered during the French occupation of Berlin and printed under the censorship of M. Bignon, the Intendant, had a great effect upon the feelings of the cultivated class.'

But here the extract must be interrupted, for new matter for reflexion is before us. I have endeavoured above to trace the steps by which Stein advanced to a comprehensive conception of the work before him. At first, I have pointed out, he saw nothing needful but an administrative reform. Then arriving at Memel and having the labours of the Immediate Commission submitted to him, he at once recognizes the value of their sweeping suggestions and puts his hand to a vast social and industrial innovation. Then comes upon him the discovery of the complete hollowness of the Peace of Tilsit, and of the immense financial needs of the State. We have seen him grappling with these financial difficulties, and have remarked that the leak through which the wealth of Prussia was disappearing evidently was one which could not be closed, because Napoleon did not want it to be closed. As soon as Stein saw this clearly it was inevitable that he should think of a new war, but we can fancy with what reluctance he gave way to such a thought. A new war! What could be expected from a new war undertaken by an impoverished state, which when at the height of prosperity had shown itself too demoralized to keep the field, and had, as yet, scarcely begun to reform its army? It was just at this stage in the course of his reflexions that the Spanish Rebellion happened,

and showed him a nation in many respects far more demoralized and less prepared for war nevertheless undertaking it, and, after a short time, with signal success. But something else arrived about the same time to influence his mind. That in the midst of such weighty matters he should remember to mention Fichte's Addresses is a remarkable testimony to the effect produced by them on the public mind, and at the same time it leads us to conjecture that they must have strongly influenced his own. They had been delivered in the winter at Berlin and of course could not be heard by Stein, who was then with the King, but they were not published till April. As affecting public opinion therefore, and also as known to Stein, the book was almost exactly of the same date as the Spanish Rebellion, and it is not unnatural that he should mention the two influences together. In the educational schemes which were discussed in the later months of the Ministry and in the more elevated tone which the Reformers began to take Fichte's influence is traceable; it seems to have dictated the closing paragraph of the Political Testament which was signed by Stein on his retirement at the end of the year and which will be given below.

But what must have struck him most in Fichte's book, was that in which it confirmed the lessons taught by the Spanish Revolution. When the lectures were delivered at Berlin a rising in Spain was not dreamed of, and even when they were published it had not taken place, nor could clearly be foreseen. And yet they teach the same lesson. That doctrine of nationality which was taught

affirmatively by Spain had been suggested to Fichte's mind by the *reductio ad absurdum* which events had given to the negation of it in Germany. Nothing could be more convincing than the concurrence of the two methods of proof at the same moment, and the prophetic elevation of these discourses (which may have furnished a model to Carlyle) was well fitted to drive the lesson home, particularly to a mind like Stein's, which was quite capable of being impressed by large principles. Moreover Fichte's strong personality may have inspired Stein with more interest than he commonly felt for philosophers; the two men resembled each other morally; and if we may believe Arndt they resembled each other even in personal appearance, so much so that after his first interview with Stein, Arndt went away, as he tells us, racking his brain to think where he had seen that face before, and at last recollected that the face of Fichte had all the same characteristics, except that Fichte had always the expression of one who sought, while Stein wore the look of one anchored and secure.

Fichte's Addresses do not profess to have in the first instance nationality for their subject. They profess to inquire whether there exists any grand comprehensive remedy for the evils with which Germany is afflicted. They find such a remedy where Turgot long before had looked for deliverance from the selfishness to which he traced all the abuses of the old régime, that is, in a grand system of national education. Fichte reiterates the favourite doctrine of modern Liberalism, that education as hitherto conducted by the Church has aimed only



at securing for men happiness in another life, and that this is not enough, inasmuch as they need also to be taught how to bear themselves in the present life so as to do their duty to the state, to others and themselves. He is as sure as Turgot that a system of national education will work so powerfully upon the nation that in a few years they will not be recognisable, and he explains at great length what should be the nature of this system, dwelling principally upon the importance of instilling a love of duty for its own sake rather than for reward. The method to be adopted is that of Pestalozzi. Out of fourteen lectures the first three are entirely occupied with this. But then the subject is changed, and we find ourselves plunged into a long discussion of the peculiar characteristics which distinguish Germany from other nations and particularly other nations of German origin. At the present day this discussion, which occupies four lectures, seems hardly satisfactory; but it is a striking deviation from the fashion of that age, particularly in a treatise on education, that so much importance should be attached to national distinctions, and that the distinctively German quality in the Germans should be represented as precious and deserving to be preserved with the utmost care, rather than something accidental which education was to smooth away. But up to this point we perceive only that the subject of German nationality occupies Fichte's mind very much, and that there was more significance than we at first remarked in the title, *Addresses to the German Nation*; otherwise we have met with nothing likely to seem of great importance

to a statesman. But the eighth Lecture propounds the question, What is a Nation in the higher signification of the word, and what is patriotism? It is here that he delivers what might seem a commentary on the Spanish Revolution, which had not yet taken place. His German experience has trained him to perceive clearly the difference between the Nation and the State; he has learned to understand the preciousness of the national tie even when no civic tie is involved with it, and when he speaks of patriotism he does not for a moment confound it with fidelity or loyalty to the State. For he is not addressing the Prussians, who might be thought to be united by the civic bond, but the Germans, who had lately seen the slight civic bond that united them contemptuously snapped by Napoleon, but yet felt the national bond still holding them together. It is because this German nation which he addressed was in the opposite extreme to Spain, that he throws so much light upon the Spanish movement. He explains the vitality of Spain in the midst of her extreme political decay when he points out that a nation is quite different from a polity, though this would never have been learnt from contemplating Spain itself, in which the nation and the polity were absolutely identified.

Nation and Country (he says here) extend far beyond the State in the ordinary sense of the word, beyond the order of polity, as this is apprehended in an abstract simple conception, constituted and conserved in accordance with that conception. The object of this is security of rights, internal peace, a good for every one and preservation of material existence and pleasure by means of industry. All this is but preparation for that which patriotism has mainly



And now for the difference between patriotism and mere civic duty or loyalty.

The mere maintenance of the traditional constitution, of the laws, of civil well-being, requires no life properly so called, no original act of the will. But when this uniform course is exposed to danger and it is necessary to form new resolutions without the help of precedent, then there must be a self-acting principle of life. What then is the spirit that can be put at the helm in such a case, that can decide with proper firmness and sureness and without uneasy hesitation, that can have an unquestionable right to demand of every one it meets, whether he himself consents or not, and if necessary to compel him, to put everything, life included, to hazard? *Not the spirit of quiet civic loyalty to the constitution and the laws*; no, but the consuming flame of the higher patriotism, which conceives the nation as the embodiment of the Eternal; for which the high-minded man devotes himself with joy, and the low-minded man, who only exists for the sake of the other, must be made to devote himself. Not that civic loyalty to the constitution; that, if it acts reasonably, can do nothing of the kind. For whatever happens, since government is not done for nothing, it will always be able to find a governor. Even if he introduces slavery, since he makes his profit out of the lives, the number, even the well-being of the slaves under him, if he knows at all how to calculate, slavery will be endurable. They will always at least have life and maintenance. And why then should they fight? After these two things quiet is the most important thing to them. And this is only destroyed by the continuance of the contest. Accordingly they will take every means to bring it as soon as possible to an end, they will comply, they will give way, and why not?

He asks what made the ancient Germans resist Rome so long, though they must have known the superiority of Roman civilization? and answers,

A Roman writer makes their leaders express it thus: 'whether anything else remains, but either to assert their liberty or die before they are made slaves.' To them freedom meant just remaining Germans, continuing to settle their affairs indepen-

dently and spontaneously, according to their own disposition, and also developing in accordance with it and transmitting the same independence to their posterity: while slavery to them meant all the advantages the Romans offered, because they would force them to become something different from Germans, to become half Romans. They assumed it as a matter of course that any one would rather die than see this happen, and that a real German could only wish to live in order to be and remain a German, and train his family to be so too.

The following paragraph must have seemed within a month after it was published a real prophecy.

He who sets a definite limit to his sacrifices and declines to venture further than a certain point, will cease to resist as soon as he sees the danger arriving at this point which will not bear to be surrendered or sacrificed. He who sets no such limit, but stakes everything, and the utmost that man can lose here below, his life, will never cease to resist, and must certainly prevail if his antagonist does not go so far. A nation that is capable, if it were only in its highest representatives and leaders, of fixing its eyes firmly on the vision from the spiritual world, Independence, and being possessed with the love of it, like our earliest ancestors, will assuredly prevail over a nation that is only used as the tool of foreign aggressiveness and for the subjugation of independent nations, like the Roman armies; for the former have everything to lose and the latter only something to gain.

Here certainly is heard the tocsin of the Anti-Napoleonic Revolution and of all the Nationality Wars that were to follow. Fichte proclaims the nation not only to be different from the state, but to be something far higher and greater. His view of it, we may observe, is not quite the same as that which we were led to take in considering the Spanish movement. We treated it as analogous to the clan



and as a stronger union than the state, because the attraction which holds it together is more instinctive and, as it were, more animal. This is perhaps the true account of the nation as such, but such a nation as Fichte describes, the undying whole of which the individual is a perishable part, and in which the work and spiritual life of the individual may hope for a kind of earthly immortality, is also to be found in favourable circumstances, though it was perhaps something scarcely so sublime for which the Spanish patriots devoted themselves. But we have observed that the special lesson of the Spanish Revolution was not so much the superiority of the nation to the state as the immense force that was gained when nation and state coincided. Applied to Germany this doctrine would lead to the practical conclusion that a united German State ought to be set up in which the separate German States should be absorbed. And to this conclusion the principles now proclaimed by Fichte have gradually brought his countrymen. But it is not to be supposed that he draws this conclusion himself. In the lecture before us he contents himself with advising that patriotism as distinguished from loyalty to the State should be carefully inculcated in the new education, and should influence the individual German Governments. It would not indeed have been safe for Fichte to propose a political reform, but it rather appears that he thought it an advantage rather than a disadvantage that the nation and the state should be distinct. The following passage is interesting as showing how much beauty could be found in that old constitution of Germany which to us seems so chaotic.

With the Germans as with the ancient Greeks, and with them alone, the state and the nation were actually separated from each other, and each had a representation of its own, the former in the particular German kingdoms and principalities, the latter visibly in the Imperial Union, and invisibly according to an unwritten law which nevertheless lived in every mind and showed itself everywhere indirectly in a crowd of customs and arrangements. As far as the German language extended each man who saw the light within its frontiers might regard himself as having a double citizenship, at the same time of his native State, to whose care he was committed in the first instance, and of the whole common Fatherland of the German nation. It was open to each man over the whole surface of this Fatherland to look out for himself the culture that had the most affinity with his understanding, and the sphere of action that suited it best, and a talent did not grow into its place like a tree, but was allowed to seek it. He who fell out with the neighbourhood in which he found himself through the direction which his culture took, easily found a cordial reception elsewhere, replaced his lost friends by new ones, found time and leisure to explain himself more fully, perhaps even to win over and reconcile those whom he had offended and so to unite the whole. No Prince of German birth has ever brought himself to confine his subjects to a fatherland limited by the mountains or rivers which bounded his own dominion, or to regard them as bound to the soil. A truth which might not be proclaimed in one place was allowed to be proclaimed in another, in which perhaps those which were allowed there were in turn forbidden; and so with much one-sidedness and narrowness in particular states there yet prevailed in Germany taken as a whole the greatest freedom of investigation and publication that any nation ever possessed; and everywhere the higher culture was and remained the result of the reciprocal action of the citizens of all the German States; and this higher culture gradually in this form filtered in due course down to the greater people, which so went on ever educating itself by its own action.

Fichte speaks here rather as a Professor than a politician; evidently he is thinking of what happened to himself when he left Saxony in consequence



of the charge of atheism that was brought against his philosophy, and afterwards found a refuge in Prussia.

In the following lectures Fichte returns to the subject of education, where we do not follow him in detail. It must not be forgotten, however, that his words on this subject did not fall to the ground. They certainly influenced Stein, and we may suppose that they did much to form the ideas and plans of the great educational reformer who soon after appeared, W. v. Humboldt. The following passage partly explains the importance Fichte just then attached to education, and the last sentence of it hints at the difficulty under which the speaker laboured in attempting to rouse the energies of his countrymen in the presence of the French censor.

That we can no longer resist openly has been already assumed as palpable and universally admitted. Having then lost the first object of life, what remains for us to do? Our constitutions will be made for us, our treaties and the use of our military forces will be prescribed to us, a code will be given us, even the right of judicial trial and decision and the exercise of it will be at times taken away; for the present we shall be relieved of all these cares. Education alone has been overlooked; if we want an occupation let us take to this. There we may expect to be left undisturbed. I hope—perhaps I deceive myself, but as it is only for this hope that I care to live I cannot part with it—I hope to convince some Germans and bring them to see that nothing but education can rescue us from all the miseries that overwhelm us. I count especially upon our being made more disposed to observation and earnest reflexion by our need. Foreign countries have other comforts and resources; it is not likely that they will give any attention to such a thought, supposing it to occur to them, or give any credit to it; *on the contrary, I hope it will prove a rich source of amusement to the readers of their journals if they ever learn that any one promises such great results from education.*

Education is to be compulsory, as military service, and for the same reason, that is, the necessity of it to the public welfare.

In past times the performance of military service was left to free choice ; but when it was found that this was not sufficient for the purpose in view, no scruple was made of helping it out by compulsion, because we thought the matter important enough and necessity suggested compulsion . . . But if, to avoid too much outcry at first, we choose to limit the compulsion in the same way as hitherto the compulsion to military service has been limited, and exempt from it the classes now exempted from that (*i.e.* the middle class), no serious mischief will result. For the rational parents of the exempted class will voluntarily submit their children to this education.

This singular connexion between German culture and the middle class of the population is unconsciously marked in the following sentence.

It will now be made clear where our boasted culture is confined to a few persons of the middle class who display it in literature, such as all German states can point to, and where on the contrary it extends also to the higher classes who counsel the Government.

In the twelfth lecture he brings us back to the subject of nationality, recapitulating what he has said under three heads of inquiry : (1) whether it is true or not true that there is a German nation, and that its continuance in its peculiar and independent character is now endangered ; (2) whether it is worth while or not worth while to preserve it ; (3) whether there is any sure and thorough means of preserving it and what that means may be. He conjures his audience to form some definite opinion, on these points and then stick to it. Let them not flatter themselves that when their independence is



gone their language and literature will remain. It is before all things to be remembered that

the first original and truly natural frontiers of states are unquestionably their spiritual frontiers. What speaks the same language, that is from the first and apart from all human contrivance united by mere Nature with a multitude of invisible ties. It understands itself and may go on understanding itself better, it belongs to itself and is by nature one and an indivisible whole. Nor can it at pleasure take up and mix into itself a nation of foreign origin and language without—at least at first—confusing itself and violently disturbing the even course of its development. Only from this internal frontier described by the human being's essential intellectual nature comes the external limitation of the territory as a consequence; and in a natural view of things it is not the people who live within certain mountains and rivers who form on that account a nation, but contrariwise people live together and are shielded, if fortune arranges it so, by rivers and mountains, because already by a higher law of nature they were a nation.

There follows a vivid description of a Universal Monarchy and of the barbarism and wickedness by which alone such a fabric could be supported; assuredly Napoleon had reason to complain of Bignon's negligence in allowing this passage to be printed.

The series closes with a general exhortation, which is an admirable specimen of prophetic eloquence. I extract from it such sentences as bear upon our present subject.

On you it depends whether you will be the end and the last of a race worthy of little respect and likely to be despised no doubt even above its deserts by the after time, in reading whose history later generations, if in the barbarism which will begin there can be such a thing as a history, will be glad when the end of them arrives and adore the justice of Destiny; or whether you will be

the beginning and germ of a new time glorious beyond all your imaginations, and those from whom posterity will reckon the years of their welfare. Consider that you are the last in whose hand this great renovation is placed. You have at least heard the Germans spoken of as one, you have seen a visible sign of their unity, an Empire and an Imperial Union; or you have heard of it; among you have been heard from time to time voices that were inspired by that higher patriotism. Your successors will grow accustomed to other views, they will adopt foreign forms and another current of life and affairs; and how long will the time be till no one lives any longer who has seen Germans or heard of them?

Then he addresses separate classes, first the young, then the old. I have spoken of the campaign of Jena more than once as the campaign of old men; Fichte has perhaps the Brunswicks, the Möllendorffs, the Kalkreuths, &c., in his mind when he breaks out as follows:

Look through the history of the last two or three decades; all but yourselves agree, nay you yourselves each in the department that does not concern himself agree, that—omitting exceptions and looking only at the majority—in all branches, in science as well as in practical affairs, worthlessness and selfishness have been greater in the greater age. . . . Yours was the force that checked all improvement which kind Nature offered us from her ever youthful bosom, all the while until you were gathered to the dust which you already were, and until the next generation in striving with you had grown like you and adopted your mode of proceeding. You have only to behave now as you have behaved hitherto towards all proposals of amendment; you have only to prefer still to the common weal your empty point of honour, that there shall be nothing between heaven and earth that you have not searched out, and you will win a last contest that will relieve you of all future contests; no amendment will take place, but deterioration upon deterioration, so that you may still hope to enjoy much satisfaction!

Men of business he reproves for their contempt for culture. Thinkers and writers he warns not to

complain so much of the shallowness of the age, for 'what class is it that has educated this shallow generation? The most evident cause of the dulness of the age is that it has read itself stupid in the books you have written!' The Princes he addresses with little bitterness and commends to them his scheme of education. 'Let your counsellors (Stein, for example) consider whether they find it sufficient or whether they know anything better; only let it be equally thorough-going.'

He closes with an appeal to the memory of those forefathers who resisted Rome and those who brought in the Reformation, and to the hope of that posterity who will one day call them forefathers. This peroration, though in the approved style of rhetoricians, is scarcely to be called artificial. A preparation has been made for it in the definition of nationality, the virtue of which has been made to lie precisely in that union of past and present generations which secures to the actions of man an earthly immortality.

I should not have lingered so long over this book if it did not strike me as the prophetic or canonical book which announces and explains a great transition in modern Europe, and the prophecies of which began to be fulfilled immediately after its publication by the rising in Spain. We have distinguished above¹ two different kinds of Revolution, which may be called the English and the French. Both are strictly political, that is, they concern the State. The French Revolution places the State in impartial supremacy over all classes in the community, by destroying the exemptions claimed by the noblesse and clergy; at the same

¹ See Vol. 1. p. 183.

time it has a tendency to extend the province of the State. The English Revolution endeavours to reduce the province of the State for the advantage not of any class but either of individual liberty or of local self-government. We have now before us a third Revolution, not less important than either, which is the Spanish Revolution. It does not directly concern the State at all, but brings out the conception of that which so often lies smothered under political machinery, the Nation. As the French Revolution aims at equality and the English at liberty, this has for its object what is often misdescribed as liberty but is really independence. Nevertheless as soon as independence is gained and the spirit of nationality roused, questions properly political arise and a tendency towards one of the other revolutions shows itself, for the machinery which suits an artificial state will not suit one which is also a nation.

It is this Spanish Revolution which when it has extended to the other countries we call the Anti-Napoleonic Revolution of Europe. It gave Europe years of unparalleled bloodshed, but at the same time years over which there broods a light of poetry; for no conception can be more profoundly poetical than that which now woke up in every part of Europe, the conception of the nation. Those years also led the way to the great movements which have filled so much of the nineteenth century, and have rearranged the whole central part of the map of Europe on a more natural system. Our own business will be mainly with the spreading of the Spanish Revolution to Germany and particularly to Prussia, and with its consequences there.



CHAPTER II.

STEIN AND INSURRECTION.

WE have seen in the Spanish rising not only a serious blow to Napoleon's power, but also the beginning of a moral resistance to the very principle of his Empire and the revelation of a new resource which statesmen might use against him. Yet the first attempt to use this resource failed deplorably, and his Empire was not in the end overthrown in the way that Stein may have expected in 1808. Stein no doubt looked forward to the rise of a party of national independence in Germany, which would simply follow the Spanish example. It would be led by the Prussian and Austrian Governments, which would forget their old discords in a common need. The insurrection of Germany would be less fiery, but then it would be guided with much more intelligence, than that of Spain, and it would be equally helped by England. Gradually the disasters of the last three years would be repaired and Napoleon's armies rolled back to the Rhine or perhaps even further.

What actually happened was different, because the alliance between Prussia and Austria could not be realised soon enough. In consequence of this Napoleon was able to engage Austria alone in 1809, and he now reduced her as low, proportionally to her former power, as he had reduced Prussia two years before. This new triumph had the effect of effacing from the mind of Europe the impression produced by the Spanish rising. Having thus recovered lost ground he abandoned himself to all appearance to a sort of fatality. As though his inventiveness were exhausted he remained idly gazing at the war in Spain, which he took no decisive steps to finish. By itself it was no serious wound to a power so vast as his, and those moral effects of it on which we have dwelt he either allowed himself to forget or had never clearly understood. He fell back upon the feeblest of his plans, the continental blockade, and sacrificed to this the Russian alliance, before it had yielded by any means all the profit he might have drawn from it. But at the same time he warded off the danger of a union of all Germany against him by the Austrian marriage. In the end he was indeed overthrown by the Spanish ideas, but it was in Russia that they first crossed his path again, and when a year later they were found animating the Germans as well, it was the North Germans only, and Austria this time is late and half-hearted in taking arms against him.

The remaining months of Stein's Ministry are occupied, so far as foreign policy is concerned, with the struggle to bring about a close alliance between



Prussia and Austria, and so give the affairs of Europe the other turn. If Stein and Scharnhorst could have had their way, the year 1809 would have seen the Spanish Revolution transferred to Germany, and Napoleon coping not merely with the Archduke's army on the Danube, but with a universal rising of the German nation in concert with such armies as Prussia could send into the field under Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, helped by the money and stores of England. We are now to consider more particularly what their plan was, and what were the obstacles which defeated it.

The Spanish explosion had a more speedy reverberation in Austria than in Prussia. Not so completely disabled by the campaign of 1805 as Prussia had been by that of 1806, Austria steadily contemplated a renewal of the war. She was reforming her military system and setting a Landwehr on foot even before the movement in Spain began. No sooner had it begun to be successful than the sympathy of Austria showed itself so strongly that a new struggle between her and France was clearly foreseen. At the moment of the Capitulation of Baylen (July 22nd) this war seemed on the point of breaking out, and thus the Spanish rising seemed likely to be not only in the end but even immediately the signal of an anti-Napoleonic Revolution throughout Europe. It was thus in August that it became necessary for the Prussian Government to determine upon the course it should pursue in the crisis which if not actually at hand was certainly not far distant. Stein had returned from Berlin to Königsberg at the end of May, and had been occupied during June

and July with affairs of the greatest importance relating to internal government. These I find it advisable to pass over for the present in order that we may consider connectedly the course he pursued in those foreign questions upon which everything then depended.

From a report of Stein's dated August 11th we are able to discover the view he took of the prospects of Prussia at this moment. First then how does he regard Napoleon's power? Does he think of it as an unreal fabric, as certain to crumble away in a little time?

It is very doubtful (he says) whether the present state of affairs will continue or pass away. The mass which is held together by the power of a great man may dissolve after his death, or complications may arise from his caprice and recklessness which he is not able to disentangle. He does not seem to have at all calculated upon the Pope's firm maintenance of his principles, nor on the resistance of the Spaniards, which forces him to use troops to coerce them and once coerced to keep them in obedience. On the other hand it is also possible that the Emperor Napoleon will surmount all these difficulties and crush Austria, destroy all old dynasties as he has done the Bourbons, deprive the monarchies of their independence and make Europe a vassal of France. In that case there will be no more foreign wars, but instead of them humanity will be tormented with civil wars and the outbreak of domestic factions, all Nationality destroyed or crippled, and the conduct of all great interests of the human race committed to a bureaucracy receiving its definitive guidance from a distant and foreign ruler. Such a state of things may last a long time, as the history of the Roman Empire proves. But whether transient and calculated only for the life of the Emperor Napoleon or permanent, the present state of things is in either case very wretched for nations and their rulers, and they are called on to apply all means to avert the fate that threatens them.



What then is to be done? Shall we submit or resist? We must therefore keep alive in the nation the feeling of discontent with this oppression, with our dependence on a foreign nation, insolent and growing daily more frivolous. We must keep them familiar with the thought of self-help, of the sacrifice of life and of property, which in any case will soon become a possession and a prey to the ruling nation; we must diffuse and give currency to *certain ideas about the way of raising and conducting an insurrection*. To this end many ways may be discovered and adopted without the Government showing its hand in the matter, which however, as occasion serves and circumstances favour, will be able to avail itself of such a disposition.

Such a plan presumes an alliance with Austria and England in order to get arms, money and the assistance of the army of the former Power, and means might be taken to secure this alliance.

The leading idea of cooperating by insurrections on the occasion of the outbreak of a war between Austria and France might be laid before both Powers, and a statement asked of them what help they are prepared to offer. The plan of operations must be arranged with Austria and support in money and arms with England, also in case of failure security for the royal family.

But does Stein consider, it may be asked, what security the *nation* will have in case of failure? To the nation will not failure be complete ruin, and is not this very fact a sufficient condemnation of the whole scheme? Has not the result shown that the King was wiser than Stein, when he rejected this plan, submitted for several years to what was inevitable, then when the opportunity was really favourable took a decisive step and met with complete success? This objection is to be answered by asking in return whether it was at all reasonable to look forward to so enormous a disaster as overtook Napoleon in Russia. But Stein answers it as follows:

We must look the possibility of failure firmly in the face, and

consider well that the Power we attack is great and the intelligence which guides it vigorous, that the *contest is begun less in regard to the probability of success than to the certainty that without it destruction is not to be avoided*, and that we do our duty better by our own age and the next and by the honour of the King and nation in falling with arms in our hands, than in patiently suffering ourselves to be fettered and held in chains. We must make ourselves familiar with the thought of every kind of sacrifice and of death if we would tread the path now proposed. Thus prepared internally and favoured by circumstances, let us begin in God's name and remember that by courage and fortitude great ends have been reached with small means. Only we must be rid of all languid wretched creatures that are insensible to noble feelings and incapable of any kind of devotion and sacrifice, people who mar and spoil everything and think of nothing but the quiet enjoyment of their miserable existences.

Thus if resistance might possibly lead to ruin, submission, according to Stein, would do so certainly. In this reasoning it seems to me he was justified, even though the event might seem to refute it; for the disaster in Russia was so entirely unprecedented that no statesman had any right to calculate upon it, however much he might be alive to the possibility of some quite exceptional calamity arresting a course so violent as Napoleon's. It is the part of the patriot to try something, even though all efforts are likely to be vain, and those who counsel inaction are not shown to be in the right although while they fold their hands rescue comes of itself. The belief that nothing was risked by resistance which was not equally likely to happen if Prussia abstained from resistance was shared by Scharnhorst. He writes as follows :

If this war with Austria ends happily for France, no one will any longer hinder the complete sovereignty of Napoleon in

Europe. Destruction of the royal dynasty and perpetual war for the interest of France will be in that case the fate of the Prussian royal house and people. What awaits Prussia in that case has happened already to Sardinia, Etruria, Spain and the Pope. Nature and habit combine to strengthen Napoleon's love of dominion, and that with the most irreconcilable hatred to the royal house of Prussia. Prussia therefore is not in any case to expect a continued existence from Napoleon. In a war with France it may no doubt easily happen to Prussia to be annihilated, but that is no worse fate than will most probably be brought about a few years later by an alliance with France. In a war waged against France by Prussia in conjunction with Austria much more is risked by Austria than by Prussia, for the former has a great deal and the latter little to lose—we have only a half existence—and therefore Prussia has good reason to seize the opportunity of such an advantageous alliance.

In this last sentence an additional consideration is urged. The threatened annihilation of Prussia, that is, its annexation by the French Empire, was really hardly to be thought of as a calamity, for the actual condition of the country was in scarcely any respect less humiliating and was decidedly more painful than any into which annexation could bring her. She risked in fact little, for she had already lost almost everything.

In urging the arguments for war this party often proposed the question, what would probably be the course of events in Europe at large if Austria fought Napoleon alone. It was easy to predict that she would be conquered, for she was considerably weaker and Napoleon considerably stronger than in 1805, when even the help of Russia did not save her from crushing defeat. If then she was beaten what would happen next? Since this actually took place and we are so familiar with all that followed,

it is interesting to look back and see what then appeared probable. We are apt to think of Napoleon's invasion of Russia as a wild undertaking, which proves him to have been intoxicated by success. I give Stein's predictions, which are also interesting because they show us the notion he then had of the Czar Alexander, with whom he was afterwards closely connected.

When Austria is subjugated, France will find in the use it will make of its fragments, in the passive obedience of the miserable and selfish German princes and the insurrectionary spirit of the 12,000,000 Poles the means of weakening Russia still further. That thinly peopled country, devoid of industry, will make but a feeble resistance, and a country ruled by a weak sensual prince, intimidated by the failure of a number of schemes abandoned as lightly as they were undertaken, through the agency of a stupid, awkward, corrupt and meddlesome bureaucracy, a country where the great mass of the nation are slaves, such a country will not long maintain the fight against civilised Europe. If then Russia is incapable after the fall of Austria of offering any vigorous resistance to France, if the intention of the latter is to destroy Prussia, if Germany can only be saved by Germany, we must strain every nerve and exert every power to attain this object.

Such then were the reasonings by which a war policy was supported. A plan of the part to be taken and the conduct to be pursued by Prussia when the war between France and Austria should begin, was drawn up by Scharnhorst, and was laid by Stein before the King along with some suggestions of his own on August 21st. First the troops in the Province of Prussia are to advance and join those of the Pomeranian Province on the middle Oder, while those in Silesia are to join the Austrians



and open to them the three fortresses of Glatz, Silberberg and Cosel, which the Austrians are immediately to provision. Next,

At the moment of this advance of the troops, there is to break out a universal insurrection in Pomerania, the New Mark, the Mark and the district of Magdeburg, Lower Saxony, Westphalia, Hessen, Thuringia and Franconia; on a single day the attempt is to be made to get possession of all the fortresses by treason or assault. Also in Silesia, if it is not prevented at the outset by the overwhelming force of the French troops. At the same time a universal conscription in East and West Prussia is either to support the advancing army or hold the Poles in check. Prussia will voluntarily surrender her Polish provinces (only retaining that which she has held since the partition of 1772) and allow the rest to constitute itself as an independent State, if by that means she can divorce the Poles from the French interest. But if Poland clings firmly to France a war of extermination must be waged against the Polish nobility. It will be a very important means of supporting the general insurrection if Austria would operate with a corps along the Elbe and from this quarter feed the insurrections with guns and ammunition. With good fortune, this might cause the destruction of the French armies, and in any case all the resources which the French draw from Germany will be taken from them....Not a word must be said of acquisitions of territory, rectifications, aggrandisements. The only question now is, of the preservation of the two States and their ruling dynasties. A miserable jealousy has brought the States of Europe to ruin, only confidence and union in good and bad fortune can rescue them. Away then with the wretched diplomatic style intended only for mutual deceit; let frankness and directness of speech reign between the Powers who take on themselves the great work of the liberation of Europe; let all their alliance, their close and sacred alliance, be union in victory or death.

Stein adds here :

The war must be waged for the liberation of Germany by Germans. This must be expressed on the flags of the insurrection;

each province must carry as its provincial ensign, its arms or name on the flag. There must be but one cocarde, the colours of the principal German nations, the Austrians and Prussians, viz. black, white and yellow.

He seems to be considering how the insurrection may be used so as to leave behind it lasting symbols of the unity of Germany.

Scharnhorst then goes on to draught the application for help which should be made to England. He states the supply of army, uniforms, &c. which he hopes to receive from England, landed at Colberg and Pillau. Stein adds: For the restoration and maintenance of an army of 100,000 men there will be required 10,000,000 thalers, partly in loan, partly in subsidy, which may be paid in money and also in goods. Other suggestions of Scharnhorst's follow, for example, that England should raise an insurrection in Hannover, while Prussia undertakes to raise the population of her old Westphalian territories.

This plan was considered by the King, whose judgment upon it was then given in a conference with Stein, Scharnhorst, and Gneisenau. It was as follows: first that nothing could be undertaken without the help of Russia, secondly, that the King did not feel he could depend either on his own people, after the experience of the last war, or upon Austria, the hereditary foe of his house. His mistrust was natural enough, but while Count Stadion guided the affairs of Austria there was good reason to hope that her policy would be on a level with the crisis; as to the likelihood of the Prussians having patriotism enough to emulate the Spaniards,



much surely must have depended upon the means taken to rouse their feelings. The King's dull despondency was indeed not calculated to strike fire out of them, but could he have shown more ardour and enthusiasm, or could he have employed some one else, for example, Stein, to rouse the spirit of the people as Chatham had done in England, there was surely no reason to despair. This indeed was precisely one of those tasks which are impossible to those who think them so, and at the same time one of those mountains which can be moved by faith.

What made the King rely so implicitly upon Russia is not clear. The Russian alliance had not profited him much in 1807. But his decision in favour of Russia was of great importance. As he had elected to be, he was saved at last in 1813 with the help of Russia, and the consequences of this have been momentous. The course of German history would evidently have been very different since if Prussia and Austria had forgotten their jealousies in a glorious, perhaps successful resistance to Napoleon in 1809; as it was, those jealousies remained and deepened, and Prussia was thrown into a dependence on Russia which has often since been burdensome to her.

Here then was a difference of opinion between the Minister and the King on a point of capital importance. Nothing in the traditions of Prussia required that a Minister should step beyond the part of a humble adviser or consider it degrading to carry out a policy he did not approve. But Stein's position was higher than that of previous

Ministers, and the question more momentous than any which for a long time a Minister had had to advise upon. It was at once felt that the Ministers could hardly continue to hold office if the King should finally decide for peace, and that something like an English change of administration might take place. Immediately after the interview with the King Scharnhorst writes to Stein :

The King must answer Yes or No to the question whether he will carry on with all his forces the war against France in conjunction with Austria, as soon as it breaks out. If so, our preparations and arrangements must go on ; otherwise not, for that would be to endanger people's lives without sufficient cause and to compromise the State. In this case the King must give himself entirely to the French party and dismiss the people who are known to the world not to be well disposed to Napoleon and the French. It is our duty, I think, to tell the King this.

In a memoir dated September 1st, and entitled 'Our Political Situation,' Scharnhorst repeats this opinion in very strong language, and points out that cruelly treated as Prussia actually was by the French it was madness for her to take up any position between desperate resistance and such unreserved adhesion as might almost compel Napoleon to requite her with favour. But whether or no the Ministers should think proper to retire voluntarily from power the question of war could not be discussed without putting them in danger of being driven from it. Stein held office, as we have seen, in spite of a strong opposition from the old aristocratic party by the tolerance of Napoleon on the one side, and on the other by the King's respect for his abilities and sense of the public need of an

able minister. His decided adoption of a war-policy might indeed have strengthened his position incalculably if he had been able to carry the King heartily with him, for he would become ten times as indispensable as before from the moment the country should be committed to a war. But if the King should even hesitate, if the question should remain only for a few weeks undecided, Stein's position would be fatally undermined. His watchful enemies at Berlin would soon penetrate the secret of the division in the King's counsels. From them the French authorities, and speedily Napoleon himself, would learn to regard Stein as the head of the opposition to French interests, and it would require a firmness of will such as we have never yet known in Frederick William to keep him faithful to one who was under Napoleon's displeasure. Thus from the moment that Stein passes from his internal, his industrial and financial reforms to become the representative of the Spanish Revolution in Germany, from the moment that his Ministry commits itself to a policy of war, his fall is certain, and only the question of time remains undecided.

Up to the beginning of August the endeavours of the opposition are aimed at simply destroying Stein's influence with the King and Queen. We may judge of their method of working by one example which is given us. A large party was to be given by the Countess v. Kalkreuth at a country seat near Königsberg. The King and Queen were to be there, and at this party the discontented faction were to gather round the royal pair, and hoped

to be able to extort by their entreaties the Minister's dismissal. Stein himself had received an invitation to the party; it was not possible to pass him over; but it was taken for granted that he would not appear, because such gatherings were known not to be to his taste. But some rumour of the plot had reached him and he disconcerted it at the critical moment by suddenly making his appearance and telling the host that 'he had made a point of coming, as he had heard that very interesting matters were expected to be discussed.' Little perhaps could be expected from such direct attacks; a much more promising plan was to call in the aid of Napoleon. Hitherto, however, the party had found no means of doing this. Stein of course, as he was bound in common prudence, had kept his anti-Gallican sentiments to himself; he had even condescended, and not without success, to play the courtier to Daru. They could indeed assert that Stein had not Napoleon's confidence, but they could bring no proof of it, and Stein could point to the fact that he had not been put at the head of affairs without Napoleon's knowledge and approval. As late as the 4th of August, in reporting upon an application for office made by Zastrow on the express ground of his influence with Napoleon and of Stein's want of credit with him, Stein was able quietly to remark that Napoleon had twice referred to him in conversation with Prince Wilhelm as a person of whom he had a good opinion. But this state of things came to an end at once when the ministers declared for war. The discontented party had now all and more than all they could possibly

wish. It would perhaps have been enough for their purposes that he should declare in favour of any kind of resistance. It was more than they could hope that he should propose the Spaniards as a model to be imitated, and rush at once into the most extreme and dangerous course that it was possible to enter upon. From that moment they had the game in their hands. All they had to do was to collect their proofs and lay them before Napoleon. We shall see how easily and speedily this was done.

The question of peace or war had been brought forward, as we have seen, by the preparations of Austria. Soon however it appeared that the breach between Austria and France was not quite so imminent as it had seemed at first. Napoleon was anxious to defer it until he could make his meditated demonstration in Spain: nor was Austria yet quite ready. The discussions at Königsberg, so dangerous to Stein's position, might therefore have been discontinued for a time if they had not been reanimated by another occurrence. Napoleon had been made by the Spanish rising as eager to recall his army of occupation from Prussia as he had hitherto been bent upon keeping it there. The first bold and wide-spread rebellion against his authority needed to be put down with exemplary promptitude, and he was bent upon invading Spain with an army such as he had never commanded before. Accordingly he wanted his soldiers from Germany just at the moment when Germany threatened to give him trouble once more. It was evidently an additional argument for the war-party in Prussia who

hitherto had been forced, as it were, to 'ground their courage in despair,' that Napoleon thus openly confessed the difficulty in which he found himself. Spain was likely to help them not merely by its example, not merely by teaching the Germans to rebel, but still more by drawing away the tyrant's armies and giving the German insurrection freedom to take its course almost unopposed. And indeed, when we follow the history of the year 1809 we see more occasion than at any earlier time to wonder at Napoleon's good luck and at the maladroitness of his enemies. The materials were all there for such an attack upon him as must have been almost overwhelming and must at least have reduced him to take up a defensive attitude. Popular insurrection over the whole of Spain; the Austrian army commanded by the general who at that time stood next to Napoleon in European reputation, the Archduke Charles, and supported by a Landwehr, by Tyrolese heroism, and by the sanguine ardour of a population emulous of Spain; Prussia also ripe for insurrection, and headed by staunch patriots, and men of spirit and experience; England already at hand with help in Portugal, and preparing a mighty expedition for a descent on the northern coast. It is scarcely credible that Napoleon should be allowed to emerge from all this to all appearance stronger and more irresistible than ever. Unfortunately the want of concert among the great Powers led them to time their blows precisely as Napoleon himself might have wished, to wait till he was quite done in Spain before breaking out in Austria, and then again carefully to delay the Walcheren expedition as if

for fear of interrupting his triumphs in the East. But the most melancholy failure of the year 1806 is the complete inaction of Prussia, which not only struck no blow in the cause of Europe, but did not even extort from Napoleon's necessities the smallest alleviation of her condition.

Our English historians of this period who have seldom gone to German sources and know scarcely anything of Stein give little substance to their account of this last and most precious of the failures of Europe in its contest with Napoleon. It cannot be properly estimated unless we go beyond the mere narrative of the operations of the year 1809, and penetrate to the plan which was hatched in the autumn of 1806 and which would have given unity and effect to these operations. It was because that plan was rejected that all the valour and self-devotion of 1809 were wasted, and Napoleon triumphed once more. The heroism and glory are indeed in this year mainly on the side of Europe, that is on the side of Hesse, Saxony, Brunswick and Palatinate: it is the first of the German Wars of Europe: but the skill and the memory are once more with Napoleon. Now the plan which might have saved everything was matured in the minds of Stein and Scharnhorst, and it was the fall of Stein, the fall first of his foreign policy and then of his Ministry in the autumn of 1806 that more than any other single incident determined the fate of all the efforts of Europe in the year 1809.

The efforts of Europe in the year 1809 were all directed against Napoleon, and it was the fall of Stein, the fall first of his foreign policy and then of his Ministry in the autumn of 1806 that more than any other single incident determined the fate of all the efforts of Europe in the year 1809.

into the field. For no one can say what might have been accomplished by such men as Stein and Scharnhorst organizing an insurrection in the style of Spain, inspiring it with their own energy, directing the movements of Blücher, Schill and Brunswick, and helped eagerly, as such leaders might expect to be, by Canning and England.

Prussia's fate now depended upon two things; first the decision of the Czar, since the King had pronounced the countenance of Russia a necessary condition of any policy of insurrection, secondly the arrangement that might be made with Napoleon with respect to the withdrawal of the French army.

When the King declared the Czar's countenance necessary he may have merely meant to say that resistance to Napoleon in itself was a desperate measure and therefore not to be thought of unless his other frontier was secure from attack. Otherwise the Czar's countenance was in fact little more to be looked for than the countenance of Napoleon himself. If the want of concert among the Governments did much to ruin their cause in 1809, of course Napoleon's rock of safety in that year was that which he had laid at Tilsit, the Russian alliance. This was the one occasion on which that system was put to proof, and most serviceable it showed itself to be. Alexander had been almost as much the author of the humiliation of Prussia as Napoleon; he had actually taken part of the spoils; he had insulted Prussia by allowing Napoleon to say that it was only out of friendship for him that the King of Prussia was restored to a part of his dominions. There seems therefore to be something singularly



confiding in the King's determination to follow Alexander's advice as to whether he should try to break the chains which had been laid on him with Alexander's own consent and assistance and for Alexander's advantage. This Czar earned at a later time the gratitude of Europe, but now he looked on with the coldest composure and quietly pocketed his bribe, while what might well have been the final subjugation of Germany was accomplished by his ally. He had been engaged in the first half of 1808 in taking possession of the first instalment of the price of Tilsit, viz. Finland, but he had been promised more acquisitions in Turkey, and at the moment when Frederick William determined to be guided by his advice he saw his way to obtain a second instalment by obliging Napoleon again. Napoleon was in real and urgent need of his good offices; he had to make up the ground he had lost in Spain and he could only do this by a great parade of his good understanding with Russia. The work of Tilsit must be solemnly ratified in the presence of Europe, and such a display must be made of the boundless power of the two Emperors as should efface from the public mind the impressions made by the capitulation of Baylen and the flight from Madrid. For a consideration the Czar was ready to gratify him in this matter; the consideration was the Danubian Principalities. Erfurt was fixed upon to be the scene of the great demonstration, and when the King of Prussia told his Ministers that everything depended on the Czar, he added that the Czar's advice could be obtained on the occasion of his passing through Königsberg on

his way to Erfurt. He might surely have added also that the very fact that the Czar was going to Erfurt with such an object was enough to show beforehand what his advice to Prussia would be. It seems however not to have been generally understood just then how completely the Czar was for the time on the side of Napoleon, and not only the King but even Stein and also the Austrian Ministers¹ seem to have thought it quite possible that they might have the help of Russia in their enterprise. Alexander arrived in Königsberg on September 18th and remained three days. He promised to intercede with Napoleon for the remission of part of his pecuniary claims and for the withdrawal of his troops, but beyond this he only recommended patience and delay. Everything, he said, must be avoided which could lead to a breach between Austria and France; if this were to occur, Napoleon might postpone the settlement of Spain and turn his whole force against Austria. The insincerity of this argument was evident. It was not serious to say that, because Napoleon if attacked at once might at great inconvenience to himself meet the attack with all his forces, therefore it was desirable to wait till the Spanish affairs were settled and he could use all his forces without any inconvenience to himself. Stein answered as follows, brushing away this argument in a single contemptuous sentence, and then proceeding to expound his plan of a German insurrection and to demand the active assistance of Russia in the tone of one who really expected to get it.

¹ Nap. Corr. 14254.



If we admit this it does not follow that we are to let Spain be crushed, and France immediately afterwards throw herself on Austria and complete the subjugation of Europe; on the contrary we must attack France while she is occupied with Spain, and we must make ready for this united attack.

Austria is armed and has set on foot a great military force; the use of it depends on Russia's decision and assent. Russia is entangled in a purposeless war with Sweden and the Porte, which occupies her military force: these hindrances must be removed with a careful hand.

Prussia is hampered by the French occupation of the land—this, it is to be hoped, will be removed by the negotiations at Erfurt; when this is accomplished we can immediately make all preparations for an army of at least 80,000 men, a Landsturm of 100,000, for an attempt on the fortresses of Magdeburg, Küstrin, Glogau, Stettin, and a rapid attack on the Kingdom of Westphalia.

If we are assured that Russia and Austria will attack in a short time we may be the more complying since the approaching war will dissolve again the engagements we form; but we must firmly insist, in the settlement at Erfurt, on the evacuation of the country and restoration of the prisoners.

Meanwhile we *must foster and support the spirit of insurrection in the Kingdom of Westphalia*, and when the movement begins we must summon the nation to a struggle with the common enemy by appropriate proclamations setting forth the object of the war, viz., the liberation of Germany from the yoke of France.

There reigns in the lost provinces of Prussia and in Hessen a great degree of disaffection, and these assuredly will all flock to the standards of German liberty.

If besides a proclamation suited to the spirit of the nation and its expectations is issued, and if appropriate arrangements are devised in the same spirit to rouse and propagate the insurrection by persuasion and compulsion, success is not at all doubtful.

But the Princes who put themselves at the head of the nation must surround themselves with men of vigour capable of self-devotion, and must put away from them all weaklings and lovers of ease and enjoyment if they would convince the nations of the fixedness of their purposes.

Germany has occasioned her own and Europe's misfortune,

she must recover again, by her efforts, her own and Europe's liberty; next she must give itself a Constitution which may restore her vigour, her unity, a legal condition of things and independence of French influence. Only one enemy of her independence, her morality, her progressive national development has Germany, and that is France. Let her make ready for a persistent and obstinate struggle with the restless, vain and domineering nation that has marred for centuries her neighbours' happiness and her own.

In the present circumstances it is necessary that Russia should (*a*) take measures for making her forces available for the great end of the liberation of Europe, (*b*) enter with Austria and Prussia into a distinct understanding to attack France while she is engaged with Spain in order to liberate Germany: (*c*) endeavour at Erfurt that the most favourable arrangement possible may be made about the evacuation of Prussia and fulfilment of the Treaty of Tilsit.

It would appear from this document that Stein had little notion of what the Czar was really meditating. He appears to take his good will and almost his assistance for granted, perhaps because he saw so clearly what Russia's interest really was. Had the Czar taken this advice, he would have saved himself the life-and-death struggle of 1812, and the Turkish provinces for which he sinned did not fall to him after all. But he would not understand that Napoleon was playing the same game with him that he had played so long with Prussia; that he was, in fact, only fattening him for the slaughter. He now quitted Königsberg for Erfurt, whither it was intended that Stein should follow him in order to negotiate with Napoleon.

I turn now to the other foreign affair which was under discussion during these same months of August and September, that is, the arrangement with France about the fulfilment of the Treaty of Tilsit



by the evacuation of the country. It has been seen that this evacuation had been delayed up to this time, first by the enormous demands made by France, and afterwards, when Stein had succeeded in satisfying the demands of Daru, by Napoleon's simple passive refusal to consider the subject. There is every reason to think that in the then condition of affairs Napoleon had no intention of evacuating a country where his troops were advantageously placed for watching Russia and Austria and were supported at the expense of Prussia. Everything had been altered by the rising in Spain. Napoleon now wanted his troops, and had made up his mind at last to fulfil the Treaty of Tilsit.

The reader's natural impression will be, as soon as the case is thus put before him, that the worst is over for Prussia, and that it will be easy for her to make some advantage out of the serious shock which Napoleon's affairs had received. This seems to have been Stein's first impression, for he writes thus:

The general condition of the foreign relations of France, the Spanish and Austrian affairs, the alteration in Turkey, the internal exhaustion of the country, have decided the Emperor to make advances to Prussia, and he probably means to turn all his united forces against Spain. Accordingly, we may expect that he will be easier to deal with, and will grant more favourable conditions than hitherto.

We have seen that Stein was deliberately of opinion that insurrection and resistance to the utmost was the right course for Prussia to adopt. This might be, and indeed he allowed it to be, a counsel of despair; but if we should admit that he went too far, there was at any rate so much plausibility in his

proposal that use might have been made of it to bring Napoleon to reason. Prussia would certainly risk little, considering how little she still had to risk, by refusing to make any more concessions. She might have said, 'What we have surrendered in Daru's convention is far more than we ever supposed ourselves to surrender when the Treaty of Tilsit was signed, and yet that treaty struck with dismay every Prussian who read it. What pretext is there now for demanding more? Have we waged another war with France, and suffered a new defeat? If it is in the mere wantonness of superior power that new concessions are now exacted from us, let Napoleon consider whether our very interest does not actually bid us resist rather than comply. He may indeed annex us—we are more than half annexed already—but can he do so without troops, and does he not want his troops in Spain? Let him understand that we have already begun to consider whether the wisest course to take with him is not the most desperate, and that our leading Ministers are clearly of that opinion. He knows that Austria can already hardly restrain herself, while he himself judges Spain to require his personal presence at the head of 300,000 men. We are at the end of our concessions; if he wants more than we now offer, let him add to the two great wars he has already on his hands another which will be conducted with something of the spirit of the Spaniards, a war in which, supposing him to be successful, we shall lose little, while he cannot but lose much.'

It was no doubt to be expected that Napoleon would at first make new demands in return for with-



drawing his troops. It was not his custom to lose anything for want of asking for it, and in the present case imperiousness was the best mask under which he could conceal embarrassment and weakness. But if the Prussian King would only entrench himself in his despair and firmly refuse to be thus browbeaten, it was impossible but that in the end Napoleon must give way. We are now to describe how not even despair could inspire the King with courage, and how Prussia, already brought so low, took another downward step.

In the first place, Napoleon raised his pecuniary claim which, by the Convention of March, was little over 100,000,000 francs to 141,000,000. This was to be paid over to France in a form which would require Prussia to disburse nearly two million thalers and a half every month. Moreover, by a repetition of the trick played at Tilsit, other claims, those namely of the ceded provinces, upon the Prussian Government were proposed to be left for future settlement; and as Daru had reckoned these at 135,000,000 francs, it was evident that the new treaty would set Prussia free as little as the old one; and that it would afford Napoleon a pretext for sending back the troops he now withdrew, as soon as he should again find it convenient to subsist them at the expense of Prussia. In addition, the famous provision was to be introduced in a secret article, that the Prussian army was to be limited to 42,000 men. And for his part Napoleon offered in return *not* to evacuate the country. He proposed to retain three fortresses on the Oder, Stettin, Küstrin, and Glogau, with garrisons of which the

amount was to be stated and which were to be subsisted partly at the expense of the Prussian government. These were the terms now offered by Napoleon; it will be seen that they are in no way what they professed to be, the terms of Tilsit offered again after an interval of more than a year; but a new treaty considerably more afflicting to Prussia, which Napoleon has the assurance to offer at a moment when his power is seriously shaken and when he urgently wants his troops. But in an experience of many years he had formed his opinion of the King of Prussia and of what one might venture to propose to him, and his calculation proved correct. These proposals were made at Paris to Prince Wilhelm and Ambassador Brockhausen on the 27th and 28th of August, and Stein's report on them is dated September 14th. It makes no comment on the stipulation about the army and is confined to the pecuniary claims. It affirms that Prussia, exhausted as she was, literally could not pay a sum of almost two million and a half per month, points out the injustice of the claim, and declares that 'by accepting such proposals the Prussian State would recognize unjust claims as legitimate, incur obligations it could not fulfil, and remain exposed to the danger of being occupied by troops once more, and seeing the royal family driven out under the pretext of breach of engagements.'

He does not of course propose to meet the proposal with a blunt negative, but remarks that

The situation warns us to make no hasty resolution, for Austria's declaration has left Napoleon in perplexity, and the insurrection in Spain, where the French troops are driven over the Ebro and



Portugal is liberated, is taking a solid and important character, while the hope of embarrassing England by closing the harbours of the continent has vanished and left her position more splendid than ever, and we may expect that the Emperor Alexander will in the end, recollecting his dignity and the danger to which his independence will be exposed by the subjugation of Prussia, take up the cause of this country, its ruler and his family.

He concludes thus :

It is therefore my opinion that we should not accept M. Champagny's proposals, but abide by the Convention of March, only stipulating for a longer term, that we should inform Austria of the course of the negotiations and demand her cooperation, that we should represent to the Emperor Alexander the injustice of M. Champagny's new proposals and the impossibility of accepting them, and also recall the Prince.

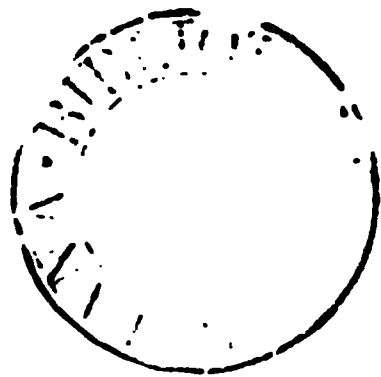
Thus, on the whole, Stein's foreign policy at this crisis consists, first, in making the best terms possible with Napoleon in respect of the evacuation ; secondly, in preparing resolutely for an insurrection throughout North Germany, to begin as soon as war should be declared between France and Austria. It is true, as he himself remarks, that if an insurrection was at hand it was in itself of little consequence what engagements were entered into at Erfurt ; but he had no desire, even under duress, to sign conditions without the intention of performing them ; and in a case where so much depended upon guiding and animating to enthusiasm the feeling of the country, it was all-important not to begin by acts which would wear the appearance of weakness. Such was his plan, bold, no doubt, yet far less bold than that which Spain had adopted in the spring ; the principal difficulty of it lay perhaps in

the coldness and want of clearness which was already discernible in the conduct of Austria; but we cannot help thinking that, in the hands of Stein, such a plan might have succeeded splendidly, for the simplicity and breadth of it were suited to his genius.

On the other hand, what at this crisis were Napoleon's views? Surely the lesson of Baylen had not been thrown away upon him; surely he must have had some notion of the danger of a popular insurrection in Germany. Perhaps not, for he was a soldier, surrounded with soldiers; he felt and continually heard expressed contempt for amateur fighting. When he thought of Baylen it presented itself not as a great victory won by a popular army but simply as a misfortune caused by the unaccountable blunders of Dupont. But even if otherwise, he might fairly argue that the Germans had it not in them to rebel after the fashion of Spaniards. And then he remembered the miserable incapacity he had always found in their leaders; in Austria, Cobenzl, Mack; in Prussia, Haugwitz, Kalkreuth. We have no reason to think that he had yet discerned Stein and Scharnhorst to be of a different stamp; but even if he had there was a consideration left which was amply sufficient to reassure him. Both in Austria and Prussia the monarchy was despotic; it mattered nothing that the minister was strong if the sovereign was weak. He knew Frederick William, and this knowledge put him at his ease. His ministers would be for the most part like himself, but if by any accident he should call a stronger spirit to his aid Napoleon

knew what to do, for the case had occurred only a year before. Hardenberg had at that time given him trouble and he had caused Hardenberg to be dismissed. If another Hardenberg or a stronger than Hardenberg stood now at the King's side, what he had forced the King to do before Tilsit he could with no less ease insist on now. He would demand Stein's dismissal.





CHAPTER III.

STEIN AND THE TUGENDBUND.

THE reader will have observed in the last chapters that a change has come over the character of our hero. His original bias had been towards the industrial and financial departments of politics, and as late as 1807 we saw him declining the foreign portfolio on the ground of inexperience in that department. Even in the first months of his Ministry we remarked nothing warlike in him. He has no thought of a spirited foreign policy, and we do not find him in those first months indulging in any dream more ambitious than that of seeing the country freed from foreign troops, its industry restored, and its Ministers no longer dictated to by a Camarilla. It is true that all his reforms have been so far military that their ultimate object has been to prevent such another catastrophe as that of Jena, and probably also at some future and quite undetermined time to assert some kind of independence against Napoleon and take advantage of any turn in the tide of his fortune. His thoughts and views



are now entirely changed. He is bent upon war, speedy war, and of the most desperate kind. 'Auctor ego audendi,' has become his advice to Frederick William; and in his position such advice meant something more and different than adhesion to war policy meant in Canning or even in the Austrian Stadion. Prussia was reduced so low that war on her part would of itself have the character of an insurrection, not to mention that it was proposed to carry it on by the methods of insurrection. Varnhagen v. Ense tells us that he could not listen to Fichte delivering his Addresses to the German Nation without thinking uncomfortably of Palm, the Nürnberg bookseller, and of his fate. Much more may this be said of Stein and his advice. In a Corsican age such advice could not be given without risk. By Napoleon's order a troop of cavalry might move on Königsberg as formerly on Ettenheim, and afterwards a Military Commission sit at Berlin as formerly at Vincennes. It was by no means improbable that if Stein's schemes should become known to Napoleon before Prussia was committed to them they would provoke him to some act of sudden violence. For Stein to make himself responsible for such schemes was therefore an act of no common daring, and it was an act by which he knowingly changed the whole character of his life. He stepped out deliberately, and we may say alone—for the other members of the party, even Scharnhorst, drew comparatively little attention—into a position of deadly hostility to the omnipotent conqueror. No person similarly placed had done this before, for in Spain the leaders had been

outstripped and hurried forward by the people. He could not expect but by great good luck to play the part of the Great Irreconcilable with impunity. Napoleon's power would not in any case be broken for a considerable time, and in the meanwhile how could a private man escape it? We may understand therefore the full meaning of his words quoted above: 'We must make ourselves familiar with the thought of every kind of sacrifice, and of death, if we would tread the path proposed.' The actual result was that in a few months he was an exile fleeing for his life and deprived of his property; and this result he must have clearly foreseen from the month of August to be probably in store for him.

I have stated the reasons he gave for advocating so extreme a policy. If it be asked why he had not adopted it earlier, the answer is to be found partly in the example set by Spain, but partly also, I think, in the reflexions he had made upon Napoleon's conduct with respect to the Convention of Berlin. He had come to perceive what seems obvious enough, yet what few politicians of that age could clearly understand, that Napoleon systematically broke his engagements, and that therefore it was madness for Prussia, weakened as she was, to make any peaceful arrangement with him, because in any such arrangement Prussia's concessions would be rigorously exacted, but the equivalents would not be given. Thus on October 12th he writes,

Has the Emperor Napoleon since the year 1796, when he first appeared on the great stage, *ever* kept his promise? Were



not Sardinia, Venice, Switzerland, Egypt, and now at last Spain, victims of the blackest treachery? Has he ever observed any engagement taken to his own nation? Has he not arbitrarily destroyed and altered every part of the Constitution he had sworn to observe, involved the country in continual wars, and destroyed all the sources of her industry?

And here is the conclusion, expressed with decisive energy.

For the honest man there is no safety but in the conviction that this unprincipled man is capable of every crime, and in acting up to that conviction with promptitude, resolution, and persistence. It is more than blindness, it is a high degree of folly, to confide in the man of whom it was said with so much truth, that he 'has hell in his heart and chaos in his head.' Unfortunately the credulity of the weak is as inexhaustible as the inventiveness of the wicked, and if they do not believe they let themselves constantly be fooled by hope.

I have observed above that English people think of Stein almost exclusively in connexion with land laws. But the second and more warlike period of his Ministry has also left a faint impression in the minds of many among us, who are in the habit of regarding him as the founder of the Tugendbund. In August and September, the very months in which Stein was taking up his new position, this society was attracting general attention, and accordingly this is the place to consider Stein's relation to it.

That he was secretly animating and urging it on must have seemed at the time more than probable, almost self-evident. It aimed at the very objects which he had at heart, it spoke of him with warm admiration, and in general it used language which seemed an echo of his own. Without at least the

sanction of the Government such a society could not exist in Prussia, and such sanction the Tugendbund had applied for and received. And though in common prudence Stein could not publicly connect himself with it more directly, some such organisation seemed so necessary for carrying out what were known to be his plans, that it seemed impossible but that he had suggested and set it on foot. Such an opinion once started would for a long time gain ground in a country where the habitual action of government was secret and where public opinion lived almost entirely upon guesses and conjectures. The following extract from Marwitz, who has already been more than once referred to, puts vividly before us the common belief of the time :

The greatest expectations were formed of Minister Stein, for he was a man of acquirements, much understanding and energy. Moreover, though an Imperial Knight, he had been long enough in our service, as President in Westphalia and lately as Minister, to know the constitution and the wants of the country. At any rate, as respected the immediate need, namely to learn the total of the enemy's claims in all Provinces, and then to raise the money in any way, which wanted only activity and knowledge of the money market, for that he seemed exactly the right person. I think it quite certain that in the autumn of 1807 the enemy could have been settled with for some 20,000,000 thalers, that is, the sum to which a year and a half later the debts of the Kurmark alone had risen.

But we were deceived. He did not advance this matter at all. Instead of that he brought the Revolution into the country, the results of which have cost the country so much that Napoleon's extortions vanish in the comparison like an illusion before an appalling reality. It seems that he was not at all disposed to pay the contribution but rather aimed at overthrowing Napoleon, and for this end he favoured the Tugendbund. The French have written of its great power, and of the harm it



did them; others have said that it was only an association of persons of similar views without any political object; others again that there was such an object, but the matter was quite unimportant and the society was soon dissolved. All these statements are right, for it was with the Tugendbund as with all secret societies; there were in it deceivers, deceived, and persons frivolously well-meaning; *is habitus animorum ut pessimum facinus auderent pauci, plures vellent, omnes paterentur*. Naturally the latter were the majority: they were used to get intelligence from all quarters, to create irritation against the French (no difficult matter! for they did all they could themselves to make themselves hated), and then to make reports how discontented people are here and how discontented people are there, how here or there a rising will take place directly, and so forth. A number of deep fellows made themselves in this way an easy and agreeable livelihood, and it is scarcely to be believed what sums these people cost the Prussian treasury. You saw beardless boys and men without occupation, who had not a groschen of their own, undertake long journeys with every convenience, come back, live in comfort and without occupation, or betake themselves with an important air now to this place, now to that, and when you asked where the means came from, you were referred in a mysterious way to associations and officials in high places. But with all these people Stein accomplished nothing but his own downfall! The King himself was no stranger to the Tugendbund; the unmeaning rules of the Association had been laid before him and he had approved them. He had also, to be sure, listened to the reports, but without making up his mind to cooperate personally. But the higher classes of the Tugendbund thought otherwise; the Dupes were convinced that the King would be dragged into the universal agitation (which they thought was at the doors); the Deceivers wanted in the first place power and money, then further, when the moment came, to use and avail themselves of it, if not with the King then without any scruple against him. And so these were the traitors.

With these (and there was no want of helpers from the other classes) Stein began the revolutionising of his country, the war of indigence against property, industry against agriculture, the changing against the fixed, crass Materialism against God's appointed

order, supposed Utility against Right, the Present against the Past and the Future, the individual against the Family, speculators and counting-houses against the Land and honest trade, the bureaus against the historical conditions of the country, knowledge and supposed talents against virtue and honourable character.

This invective, so racy of the time, comes, it will be seen, from the Conservative camp; but the view of Stein's policy which it presents was perhaps the ordinary view of the time common to both sides, though one side called it good and the other side bad. The reader is already in a condition to detect the inaccuracy of much of it. That the French could have been settled with at first for 20,000,000 thalers is certainly not true, nor is it true that Stein neglected the business of paying the French for more ambitious schemes. He did all that was possible, and more than had seemed possible, towards paying them, and did not desist till he discovered that he was pouring his money into a Danaid's vase. Whatever his connexion with the Tugendbund may have been, it cannot have commenced till April, 1808, for it was in that month that the Tugendbund began its existence, and therefore nothing can be more absurd than to represent Stein as beginning to revolutionise the country with the help of the Tugendbund, for his revolutionary edict had been promulgated in the October before. Through the whole description there runs a superb contempt for dates, and a disregard of the distinction remarked above between the peaceful and the warlike periods of Stein's Ministry. But let us now proceed to examine the assumption made throughout this passage, that the Tugendbund was, as it were, Stein's army, and the principal

engine of his policy, if not actually founded by him. In his autobiography, after the reference above quoted to Fichte's Lectures, Stein continues thus :

An effect and not the cause of this passionate national indignation at the despotism of Napoleon was the Tugendbund, of which I was no more the founder than I was a member, as I can assert on my honour and as is well known to its originators. About July, 1808, there was formed at Königsberg a society consisting of several officers, for example, Col. Gneisenau, Grolmann, &c., and learned men, such as Professor Krug, in order to combat selfishness and to rouse the nobler moral feelings ; and according to the requirements of the existing laws they communicated their statutes and the list of their members to the King's Majesty, who sanctioned the former without any action on my part, it being my belief in general that there was no need of any other institute but to put new life into the spirit of Christian patriotism, the germ of which lay already in the existing institutions of State and Church.

The new Society held its meetings, but of the proceedings I knew nothing, and when later it proposed to exert an indirect influence upon educational and military institutions I rejected the proposal as encroaching on the department of the civil and ecclesiastical governing bodies. As I was driven soon afterwards out of the public service, I know nothing of the further operations of this Society.

Nothing can be more cold and unqualified than this repudiation of the Tugendbund and all belonging to it ; Marwitz himself could not refrain more carefully from applying to it a single word of commendation. Stein does not deign even to say that though, as Minister, he could not connect himself with it, yet he considered it a society that might do good. And he certainly seems to intend his readers to understand that he had not even any indirect or underhand connexion with it, but from first to last

stood entirely aloof, except in one case when he interfered to restrain its action. It is even possible that by telling us that he had nothing to do with the step taken by the King when he sanctioned the statutes of the society he means to hint that had his advice been taken, the society would not have been even allowed to exist. This is startling, not merely because it runs so directly counter to the popular belief, but also because it seems at first sight so contrary to the probability of the case. If not by some such society as this, in what way were Stein's schemes to be carried out, and how was public opinion to be prepared for the contemplated insurrection? And yet it is difficult to imagine that he is concealing, still more that he is misrepresenting the truth in this passage. For it was written long after the occurrences; it was not published till after his death; and moreover it is supported by the testimony of the Russian Count Uwaroff in a passage presently to be given, where he relates what he heard from Stein in the year 1809, and particularly mentions, as though it were even then a favourite topic with Stein, that he used to speak disapprovingly of secret societies. Add to this a solemn declaration made to Pertz in 1830: 'I never took part in it, I thought it impractical, and in practice it sank into vulgarity.'

The principal fact affirmed by Stein is indeed now beyond controversy; Stein was certainly not either the founder or a member of the Tugendbund. The society commonly known by that name, which however designated itself as the Moral and Scientific Union, was founded by a number of persons, of

whom many were Freemasons, at Königsberg in the month of April. Professor Krug, mentioned by Stein, was one of them; Gneisenau and Grolmann, whom he also mentions, were not among the first members, and Gneisenau, it seems, was never a member. The statutes were drawn by Krug, Bardeleben and Baersch, and if any one person can be called the Founder of the Tugendbund, the second of these, Bardeleben, seems best to deserve the title. The Order of Cabinet by which the society was licensed is dated Königsberg, June 30th, and runs as follows:

The revival of morality, religion, serious taste and public spirit, is assuredly most commendable; and, so far as the society now being formed under the name of a Virtue Union (Tugendverein) is occupied with this within the limits of the laws of the country and without any interference in politics or public administration, His Majesty the King of Prussia approves the object and constitution of the society.

His Majesty communicates this to the Presidents of the Union, Lehmann, v. Both, Velhagen, Chiffand, and Bardeleben, upon their application of the 18th of this month, in the expectation that they will avoid any perversion of the Society, which would lead to its instant dissolution, and they are required to send in a list of their members, not only now, but also quarterly.

FRIEDRICH WILHELM.

From Königsberg missionaries went forth who established branch associations, called Chambers, in other towns, first those of the Province of Prussia, Braunsberg, Elbing, Graudenz, Eylau, Hohenstein, Memel, Stallupöhnen; then in August and September Bardeleben spread the movement with great success through Silesia. The spirit which ani-

mated the new society could not but be approved by every patriot. They had been deeply struck with the decay of the nation, as shown in the occurrences of the war, and their views of the way in which it might be revived were much the same as those of Stein and Fichte. The only question was whether they were wise in organising a society in order to promulgate these views, whether such a society was likely to do much good, and also whether it might not by possibility do much harm. Stein's view, as he has given it, was that it was not likely to do much good, and that such an organisation was unnecessary. But if this was the whole of his view it seems difficult to account for his behaviour. There was not so much zeal for the public good at that time in Prussia that the self-sacrificing efforts of private citizens, even if they were unpractical and not likely to lead to much, should deserve to be treated with cold indifference and severity. To rouse the citizens to an interest in public affairs, to teach them to think much of their country and to sacrifice something for it, was Stein's special task. The Tugendbund was surely at the very least a cheering response to his efforts. That it was not very wise was almost a matter of course, for it was the effort of a patriotism which was wholly inexperienced. At any rate it was a movement in the right direction; and how was it possible to be sure that any movement of the kind, any agitation which might draw public attention, any canvassing whatever of the great interests of the country, any soliciting of individuals to enrol themselves in a society of patriots,

would be useless? The Society lost no opportunity of bestowing enthusiastic praise on Stein; they looked up to him as their master, and this probably more than anything else led the public to feel certain that they acted by his orders. If this was after all really not so, if all this enthusiastic adhesion was unsought and voluntary, still we might expect to find Stein grateful for it, and therefore treating the Society with as much indulgence as possible. These considerations lead me to think that his views went further than he has chosen to reveal, and that he considered the Society not merely unpractical but positively dangerous and mischievous.

No one can read the King's Cabinet Order without seeing that this view might be taken, for the King seems even more impressed with the abuse which may be made of the organisation than with its probable usefulness. The following passage will show the impression received by no less a person than Schleiermacher, the great theologian and preacher, who divides with Fichte the honour of having led the intellectual part of the nation at this crisis into the path of patriotism, and who, like Stein himself, was associated in the popular imagination with the Tugendbund. It is taken from an answer written in 1816 to a celebrated pamphlet by Dr Schmalz, Scharnhorst's brother-in-law.

With the Moral and Scientific Union (for the sake of the uninformed I add that it is only this which is designated, as I understand, before the public by the nickname of Tugendbund, and if anyone—for one can be as little certain here as with the popular names of plants—understands another society by the name of Tugendbund, about *that* Tugendbund I know nothing at

all) I say with the Moral and Scientific Union I have had no more to do than you. I too had later, soon after the arrival of the first troops, a visit from a Herr B., not the same I think as he whom you denote by that letter (it was Baersch); he proposed that I should become the director of the Chamber here (*i.e.* in Berlin). I answered that it was against my principles to enter any secret society. He considered this Union was not one, for the Government know both the members and the statutes, and the latter at any rate I was at liberty to read. I read them, and when he came again I said to him pretty much what Niebuhr said, that even in good hands the Union would be but an insignificant affair, but if bad hands got possession of it, by its nature and constitution it might become as dangerous as the Jacobin Club. Since that I have heard so little of it that I thought it had never existed in Berlin.

The words of Niebuhr referred to in this passage are as follows :

I myself, even if I had not been abroad at the time of its establishment, would not on any account have become a member of it, for this reason, that the statutes, without any bad intention on the part of their authors, were calculated to lead either to the most mischievous or else to the most futile results. It was planned as an *imperium in imperio*, which, if it had come to life, would have been in a condition to remove the Government as soon as it might wish ; and it ought to put our alarmists somewhat at their ease that so dangerous a constitution remained so purely harmless as it notoriously did.

It seems to me that these two expressions of opinion entirely remove the difficulty of understanding Stein's conduct. Both Niebuhr and Schleiermacher may be said to have belonged to Stein's party, so far at least as that any opinion in which they agreed was likely also to be his opinion. Both were deeply impressed with the effeminacy of the nation, both were eager to rouse it from its sloth and inspire it with patriotism, and yet both con-

demn the Tugendbund so strongly that I think had they been in Stein's place they must have advised against permitting its existence. The key to the enigma is probably to be found in Schleiermacher's allusion to the Jacobin Club. No one in Germany was more liberal than Stein, no one more convinced of the necessity of treating the people with confidence and giving them a voice in public affairs. But he designed their deliberative Assemblies to be part of the constitution of the State, to stand in a definite relation, probably at first a dependent relation, to the Executive Government. It did not follow because he desired Estates or Parliaments that he was prepared to sanction a political club. Even if he looked forward to a time when clubs also might be permitted, he might still be of opinion that the time was not come. He was much in the habit of guiding himself by historical examples, and particularly examples taken from England, and it could not but occur to him that even England had in that age thought herself obliged to limit the right of public meeting. And yet England had been long accustomed to liberty, she was prosperous, and when the repressive acts were passed she was on the whole contented. The case of Prussia was more parallel to that of France; the pressure of need and humiliation in Prussia was such as might have maddened a more excitable people; and that sweeping changes were necessary Stein himself had confessed by the Edict of October. These were precisely the conditions which had made the Jacobin Club what it was, and it may well have seemed to him that to suffer a political club to come into

existence was to allow the guidance of the Revolution which he had begun to pass out of his hands.

There appears, then, when we consider it closely, nothing unnatural in the course which Stein declares himself to have taken. It is however so exactly the reverse of the course which he has been universally believed to have taken, that we may be excused for hesitating to believe his statement and for inquiring carefully whether it agrees with the other evidence. We find then that Voigt, who has had the papers of the Tugendbund before him, declares that 'they fully confirm it; that they show him to have been rather unfavourably than favourably disposed to the Society, and that he does not seem to have had the smallest share, even indirectly, in originating it.' It appears that direct applications made by the Society in the most humble and reverential language for his support were left unanswered by him, and that towards the end of September he made a positive attack upon it by a letter, in which he declared that the King's Cabinet Order in forbidding it to interfere in politics or administration had bound it to revise its statutes, and that he regretted to find that this revision had not taken place. This charge was based on a Report written by a certain Assessor Koppe (of whom we shall hear again) in which the Society was bitterly assailed as Jesuitical.

Is there any evidence on the other side? No instance, I believe, is known in which Stein by any definite act favoured the Society. All that can be said is that some persons who might be expected to know the truth believed Stein to favour it under-

hand. Thus Baersch, a prominent member, while admitting that Stein was not a member and still less the founder of it, adds he was however a protector of it. And at the end of Voigt's *Geschichte des sogenannten Tugendbundes* is printed an anonymous statement about the Tugendbund, professing to come from 'a statesman,' in which Stein's mode of dealing with the Society is described with a great air of particular knowledge. We are told that he was anxious to keep his connexion with it secret, and was glad to see insignificant people directing it because he could the more easily throw them over if there was occasion. For this reason he favoured the advancement of Prince Hohenzollern-Hechingen, who was an object of ridicule. Afterwards the proceedings of the Society began to be so senseless that there was danger of the secret being blown upon; accordingly Boyen and Grolmann were introduced into it as ballast. But they reported that nothing was to be made of a society which was conducted in such a vulgar and unintelligent way. Stein himself before his retirement had come to despair of it, and in fact it had fallen into general contempt.

Schön also asserts that 'Stein was full of this hazy idea,' and that 'in the Tugendbund he thought he had puppets of which he could pull the strings at pleasure.' But this testimony is not to be regarded as additional to that of the anonymous 'statesman,' for the statesman is in all probability (Pertz seems positively to assert it) Schön himself. And when the statesman's assertions are examined they are seen to have the definite object of defend-

ing the current belief, which Schön had so strongly corroborated, against Stein's formidable disclaimer. Thus Stein says the Tugendbund was vulgar, and that he interfered to check it; true, says this statement, of the time just before his retirement, but at the beginning he had treated it differently. I had nothing to do with it, he says; true, says this statement, he *did* grow ashamed of it. The reconciliation evidently is only apparent. Stein does not say that he left it; he says expressly that he never had anything to do with it; and there is no reason why we should doubt his word, for if the truth was that he had hoped something from it at the beginning but had found himself disappointed, we can imagine no reason why he should not have said so. But it is not necessary to suppose that there must have been a grain of truth at the bottom of the popular belief. That belief requires no explanation; it grew up in the most natural manner from the admiration of the society for Stein, from the agreement between their general views and his, and from the fact that his plans were such as seemed to require the formation of such popular societies.

It is now to be observed that hitherto we have had in view solely the Moral and Scientific Union, commonly called the Tugendbund. Other societies, though there may have been others with a very similar object, and though these too may have sometimes been called Tugendbund, have not yet been referred to. The objection to the Moral and Scientific Union was not to a society as such, but to a society with that particular constitution. It



stood in some connexion with Freemasonry, it had too much organization within itself and too little connexion with the Government. But it would indeed be very difficult to believe that Stein hoped to carry out his plans without the help of societies of the same kind. Nothing however of this kind does he assert, and the popular mistake is to some extent a verbal one. It is customary to think of the Tugendbund as a vast union into which all the discontent of Prussia and Germany spontaneously threw itself, whereas it was in reality merely a fantastic attempt of one section of the discontented to give to their movement a peculiar organization which was unnecessary and might be thought dangerous. But by the side of the Tugendbund there were other societies without this dangerous organization, indeed with scarcely any organization at all, and with these societies Stein was undoubtedly connected. I have quoted the statement of Schleiermacher that he had believed the Tugendbund had not existed in Berlin; this was true, no Chamber was ever established there; but Schleiermacher goes on to tell us that there existed another society in Berlin of which he was a member :

That before, when the enemy was still in the land and the Peace was daily violated in the most insolent manner, men principally of military views, who on account of their personal connexions might think that their secret assistance was reckoned on in certain contingencies, that such men met to prepare for and lead the way to these very contingencies, is what every one will approve. They did it at their own risk, and no abuse of such a practice could be thought of as even possible. I cannot speak of membership, for no formality whatever existed, and there were really many persons of whom I could not say whether they were

members or not. This however I know, that in taking part in their meetings I had never the slightest feeling that I was violating my principle of never entering a secret society.

From the papers of Schleiermacher some curious particulars about this Committee, for so it was called, have been published. Count Chasot was at the head of it, and its connexions extended over the whole of North Germany. While that eager controversy about the insurrection was going on at Königsberg in August and September, the Committee became naturally very much excited. They were desirous to have good information and instructions from head-quarters, and for this purpose determined to send a correspondent to Königsberg. The person selected was Schleiermacher himself. He arrived in Königsberg on August 25th, and remained there till about the 22nd or 23rd of September. He was in frequent communication with Stein at that anxious time, and he was there when the Czar made his visit. He writes later to his friend Brinckmann:

I had a capital opportunity of going to Königsberg. There I saw again many old friends and acquaintances; unfortunately I did not pass much time with Stägemann. But I made a pretty close acquaintance with that grand fellow Stein, as well as Gneisenau and Scharnhorst, spoke to the Queen, and more than all learned to know the Princess Wilhelm, whom I take for one of the first and noblest of German women.

This letter was written in February, 1809, but a few letters are also preserved which were written from Königsberg during his visit. As they relate to the dangerous subject of the insurrection, they are naturally written in mysterious language, and when persons are referred to it is under fictitious



names. For instance, when he writes of the Queen and the Princess Wilhelm, it is in the following style: 'Quednow and his wife I have not yet conversed with, and I have only seen them in church; but I often see his children, and to-day I am to dine with his sister-in-law.' For the most part what concerns important matters in these letters is too obscure to be interesting. There are however one or two gleams of light, and Stein seems evidently more than once referred to. On September 6th he writes:

I am not fortunate with Call, for I almost always miss him. I have been with *Christ* both morning and evening, and will see if I can arrange another confidential interview with him. In that case no doubt much could be settled. Hitherto I have mostly had to do with Neubaur, and I have come successfully to an understanding with him about much, but on some points not, and these could perhaps be better arranged with Christ. As to the necessity of the principal affair we seem all to be quite agreed, but there is alarm at the possibility of the land being left in weeds and very justly.

Christ appears to be Stein; Call is perhaps Gneisenau. The last sentence states in a riddling form the exact state of the debate among the patriots. They were agreed upon the necessity of the insurrection, but strongly impressed with the danger of undertaking it with half-hearted agents, such as the King never would quite part with, a Köckeritz or a Kalkreuth, mixed up among those who were staunch, like the tares with the wheat.

One out yonder has said that on the 20th of last month a decisive interview was to take place between the good man (dem lieben Manne) and our friend there. Christ is hourly expecting news of this, and I should like to wait for it as well as

for Christ's *Conte courante*, which is to be settled immediately. Perhaps too for Vincke's arrival, which Christ is expecting daily.

Here evidently reference is made to an interview believed to have taken place at Paris between Napoleon (the good man) and Prince Wilhelm. But what is meant by Christ's *Conte courante*? The most curious passage is the following, written on September 29th:

Quednow's guest leaves to-day, and therefore there will be no difficulty in my beginning my homeward journey on Thursday or Friday. I have not yet talked to any of those who have been with the man most, and shall not be able to do so till to-morrow. Christ and Quednow had yesterday a long conversation with him about business, from which Christ is said to have come away highly satisfied. It is inferred from this that the man has promised at the Erfurt fair to take charge of our affairs too. I should be sorry if I had to bring you such news, as indeed I am sorry altogether that any serious dealings with the man should have been entered on. Undeniably the true finesse would have consisted in shuffling the cards so that nothing at all should be done for us there through him, but that he should have entangled himself still further with the good man, for the more and the better he manages our affairs at Erfurt the less food will come out of it for us. Then if he came back so the thing would have been to see that he was so pleasantly entertained here in the neighbourhood as to be prevented from continuing his journey back. Meanwhile, our friends over sea might have taken his kitchen-garden to themselves. Now I am sorry to say I fear that we shall have but a moderate fair and in the end nothing but miserable weeds.

The reader will see that Quednow's guest is the Czar, who promises to intercede with Napoleon at Erfurt in behalf of Prussia. The patriots naturally feared that any success his intercession might have would make what they held the only true remedy,

that is an insurrection, more difficult. He fears that we shall get but moderate terms from Napoleon, and in the end nothing but miserable weeds, that is, we shall fall back into the hands of the French party. Schleiermacher's sketch of what he would like to see is obscure enough. But the 'friends over sea' must be the English, and he seems to think of attacking Russia as an enemy rather than trying to draw her into the European rising.

These letters, besides being curious, give us a glimpse of the real Tugendbund with which the Government was in correspondence. There was a widely spread patriotic party which was prepared to help the Government in their plan of insurrection. In many places this party formed committees consisting, as Schleiermacher tells us, principally of military men who looked forward to playing an active part in the outbreak, and to such committees the Government occasionally made communications. But as the committees were mainly military, so they seem to have communicated chiefly with the military members of the Government. It seems to have been in general not so much Stein as Scharnhorst and Gneisenau that pulled the wires of this agitation; in the insurrection which broke out in Westphalia soon after Stein's fall, and was headed by Dörnberg, we shall soon have an opportunity of observing the effect of this agitation.

At this point we are struck with the curious results sometimes produced in those times by the slowness with which information travelled. We have been lingering upon the visit of the Czar, which took place between September 18th and 21st; at this

time we see that Stein, though full of anxiety for Prussia, has no particular apprehension about himself. And yet a week before, on September 13th, Niebuhr wrote from Amsterdam to Madame Hensler as follows:

Perhaps along with this letter, perhaps even earlier, you will see or have seen in the newspapers an article which in a manner proscribes my friend Stein. Early this morning I read it for the first time, and you can fancy with what feelings. This is why I write to you to-day, for it will cause you not merely grief for us but anxiety. About that you may be easy. My relations to Stein are not such as could in the remotest manner endanger me. But what the consequences may be for Stein I wait with trembling to learn. With his way of thinking—a thousand and often the most opposite ideas thronging close upon each other—this expression meant anything rather than a formed plan; it was the effect of a bitter mood, which, if the courier had not gone off at once, so that the letter was obliged to be written, would have given place to quite a different view before night. It is however very strange that both his sister, Countess Werthern, and myself begged him almost on our knees to have no connexion of whatever kind with certain persons, whom he took for worthy people calumniated. That noble Werthern, who sees deep into the hearts of men, said to me she often felt when she saw certain persons as if the devil was standing before her. Stein reproved her for it, and once took it ill of me when from different sides we warned and conjured him not to associate with these people. I fancy I remember distinctly that the Countess told me expressly she had a presentiment that these people would bring her brother into trouble. Do not we see here unmistakably destiny and fatality? Stein always goes headlong from the most sanguine expectation to despair, and in his opinion of men often outstrips all observation. But in his own honesty much more disposed to judge favourably than to condemn, he keeps many a rogue obstinately in his good books, while an honourable man sometimes has trouble to get into them, if he does not recommend himself by anything brilliant! ‘Have you proofs against him?’ he would ask me, when I told him So-and-so would act ill in the case before us: the result gave the proof—too late.

But I take it, the crisis is close at hand now to the approach of which our eyes have long been opened. A Convention was negotiating, but not yet concluded. Will the thread snap now? Assuredly it will. And then we shall come to you, and certainly not sadder than now and for a long time past. People may say what they like about the practical use of history : certainly one is saved by a living knowledge of it from being charmed by many will-of-the-wisps. The poor Koppe, who is in trouble, is a harmless man. He has a wife and children.

This letter suggests many reflexions. The last sad paragraph seems to hint that Niebuhr considers the annexation of Prussia to be close at hand. But what is this which has happened to Stein?

CHAPTER IV.

MILITARY REFORM.

ALL the reforms of Stein, comprehensive as they were, are eclipsed in comprehensiveness, as well as fame, by that military reform which was sketched and commenced, as it were, under his auspices, but yet not by him. The series of measures commenced by Scharnhorst has determined the result of the greatest struggles of the 19th century, and has given to Prussia a new period of military ascendancy, grander and not less interesting than the brilliant period of Frederick the Great. The three principal wars of Prussia since her great disaster, those of 1813, 1866, and 1870, have a character of greatness such as no other modern wars have; the objects of them, and the spirit in which they were waged, were as high as the intelligence with which they were guided. They have in a manner reconciled the modern world to war, for they have exhibited it as a civilising agent and a kind of teacher of morals.

When we see a national army not composed of

persons tempted into it by pay and by a dislike to industry, much less of the scum of society, dupes of the recruiting sergeant or victims of the press-gang, but composed of the whole youth of a nation without distinction of rank, who after giving the first years of their manhood to their country and receiving in return from that stern mother a Spartan training in hardihood and obedience, are restored in no long time to civil life, we have before us war in its fairest aspect. It is only when we think how this system might be applied to other countries, for instance, to England, that we see how very peculiar were the circumstances which made this noble style of war possible to Prussia. Nothing is more attractive than the thought of a universal service—of every youth, without exception, paying his debt to the country. But suppose, as in the United States, that the country does not need defence, or, as in England, that the danger of invasion is speculative and remote, so that though the country needs a protecting force, it could make use^{no} whatever of such a vast army as universal service would call into existence. Suppose again—this also is the case of England—that the country, though it needs a large army, does not need it for defence but for other purposes, such as maintaining possession of distant dependencies. It cannot so easily be argued that it is proper that every youth should give some years of his life to tasks like these, as that every youth should take a personal part in the work of national defence. And thus countries which have few wars of self-defence and many wars of empire cannot adopt this system, but are driven to form one

of those purely professional armies in which war assumes a less interesting aspect.

These, then, are the two military systems which suit nations, according as they are or are not in danger of invasion. Now what we are about to examine is the establishment by Scharnhorst of the system of universal service and the abolition of the old system of Frederick the Great. What then was this old system? Was it simply the English system of a professional army founded on voluntary service, and was the principle of compulsory service introduced by Scharnhorst for the first time? This is what most Englishmen seem to think, and I have found it taken for granted even by writers on military subjects: and yet there can scarcely be a greater mistake. The principle of compulsory service was not new in Prussia; on the contrary, it was the old principle of the State on which its greatness was founded. These are the words with which Scharnhorst himself commences one of the Memoirs in which his plan of reform was first described:

Without the simple rule of the Prussian military system that every inhabitant of the State is a born defender of it, the State could never have grown to greatness in so short a time. It was by the imitation of this system that the Austrian army after the Seven Years War and the French after the first campaigns of the Revolutionary War became what the Prussian army had been before, a real standing army, that is an army which can not only be brought to a number corresponding to the population of the country but also be maintained at that number.

What then was the change now made, and why, is so much said about compulsion in the modern Prussian army and about a professional military



caste in the old Prussian army, if both alike were raised by conscription?

We have spoken of the compulsory national system as being nobler and more beneficial in its working, where it is admissible, than the voluntary system. But it is to be observed that there is a compulsory system very different from that of modern Prussia and plainly less defensible than the voluntary system. Compulsion works well in modern Prussia because it strikes all alike and because the object of imposing it is to preserve what all value inexpressibly. But where it does not strike all alike, where exemptions are allowed, the system is not merely damaged but converted at once into a bad system, chargeable with an injustice from which the voluntary system is free. That war should be a man's chosen profession and means of livelihood, so as to give him a positive interest in war, is perhaps not altogether satisfactory, but no one is injured by such a system; and so long as the soldier enters no service but that of his own country, he devotes himself to a noble object. Conscription with exemptions, on the other hand, is glaringly unjust and oppressive; not only are the exemptions themselves unjust, but so long as they exist it is impossible to put upon any high ground the constraint laid upon the rest. It is a mockery to speak of the duty of defending one's country where this duty is not made universal, but those may pay in money who do not care to pay in blood; under such a system compulsion is a shocking tyranny, similar to the levying of the *taille* upon the common people in old France, and such as could only be enforced in a population

accustomed to despotism. Moreover, if we suppose the exemptions to be very numerous, so as to comprehend whole classes, and at the same time the population of the country to be not large and its danger from foreign enemies very great, we shall have a case in which it will be necessary to make up for the exemptions by requiring those who serve to serve for a very long time. By serving many years such soldiers will acquire the character of a professional caste and become distinguished from the rest of the community, even though they did not originally enter the army by choice. The army of old Prussia was of this kind. The greater part of it was raised by conscription; but from this conscription large classes of persons, as well as whole towns and districts, had exemption. In the main the citizen class were exempt, while the peasantry were subject to compulsory service; and in order to maintain so large an army it was necessary to make twenty years the term of service.

Such a system had its advantages, but they were of a totally different kind from those of the modern system. Compulsion is common to both; but this very principle, which now has such a good moral effect, caused demoralization. The excuse for it lay in the security it gave that the army should always be large enough. To pay the market price for such an army Prussia could not afford. The Government therefore had no choice but between universal or partial conscription. As we have seen, this is in fact a choice between good and evil. Nevertheless if the old rulers, such as Frederick the Great, ever dreamed of a universal conscription, they probably

dismissed it as hopelessly impracticable; nor did Frederick, even in the extremity of the Seven Years War, think of a *levée en masse*. For there was then no patriotism in Prussia, no sense of the value of independence, and a system of universal service is not possible except where national spirit is exceptionally strong. They adopted therefore the system of partial conscription, and may perhaps be justified by necessity. But it was evidently weakest precisely where the other system is strongest, that is, on the moral side. What could be worse tyranny than to seize upon the peasant and subject him for twenty years to a brutal discipline and to the risks of war in order that he might defend a country to which he owed scarcely anything, while those who owed comfort and happiness to the State were not called on to risk anything for it? Such a system, it is evident, rested on ignorance and terror. A peasantry that had even begun to think for themselves, or that had once imagined they had rights, would rebel against it, and it is scarcely possible to compose a valiant army out of soldiers individually without spirit. Nothing but the mechanical habit of discipline stood between it and utter dissolution. When we account for the *débâcle* after Jena by the purely professional character of the army and its want of patriotism, we do not hit the precise point. An army based on voluntary contract would be called purely professional, and yet we could not understand such an army, if composed of brave soldiers, dissolving so helplessly. The truth is that the Prussian army was based on a principle worse and weaker than voluntary contract, by much more than volun-

tary contract is inferior to compulsion reinforced by moral and patriotic feeling, viz., on unjust compulsion, or compulsion repugnant to moral feeling. All that I wish to say is summed up by Gneisenau in some Notes for an Essay on the required reform, in the following pregnant headings. 'The army more an imaginary than a real force—death of public spirit in the trifling of the parade ground—constraint put on the body—stick—wretched pay—hence conscription—peasant, by the cradle of his son, thinks over his future; the series of dangers awaiting him, misery, hospital, miserable wages.' The sting of all this lies in the unjust compulsion. Soldiers will, no doubt, always complain of wretched pay; but he must be a bad soldier who, after *voluntarily* accepting such pay, refuses to perform the conditions on which it was given. On the other hand, what moral obligation can be conceived weaker than that of the peasant forced by brutal punishments, and for insufficient pay, to defend the country which starves him?

It may be said that these considerations prove too much, for if they explain how the army dissolved after Jena they make it at the same time impossible to understand how it can have fought so well under Frederick. But discipline, backed by wonderful diligence and self-devotion on the part of the King and also by much chivalrous loyalty on the part of the aristocracy of officers, may for a time, particularly while the army is victorious, lay the minds of the soldiers under a spell. It is when an ordinary king leads them and is surrounded by old and feeble officers, and when ill-fortune arrives, that the moral hollowness of the system shows itself. Even

then they do not fight ill, only defeat operates like the snapping of a spell; once driven apart, they are not urged together again by any cohesive force.

If then the fault of the army lay in its being founded not upon mercenary contract but upon an unjust kind of conscription, to make the conscription just, that is universal, was not the only way of correcting it. There was another way, viz., to abolish the conscription altogether, and with it all the grievances of which the soldier complained. It is far from being necessary to the healthy condition of an army that it should be inspired by those high feelings of patriotism to which the modern system appeals. An army well and justly treated, though only on ordinary principles of contract, may be expected to fight efficiently; we cannot suppose that the English soldiers who fought at Salamanca and Vittoria regarded themselves as fighting *pro aris et focis*, or as paying a debt to the country that had reared them; they were simply fulfilling the conditions of a contract that was voluntary and not forced. There would perhaps have been a certain consistency in the conduct of the Stein Administration if it had abolished the conscription instead of making it universal; for free trade was one of their maxims, and the conscription in its old form was part of that caste system which they were engaged in rooting out. The peasants' obligation to military service and the citizens' exemption were defended on the ground of *status*, that is on the same ground as the prohibition which lay upon each to enter into the order or acquire the land of the other. It would therefore have been possible to revive the army by the same

process by which it had been undertaken to reanimate industry; in fact, the Military Reform might have been put into the Emancipating Edict. If an article had been added to the Edict of October, declaring that no one should be required except in extreme emergencies to serve the State as a soldier against his will, and that the soldiers' pay should be determined like the wages of industry by the haggling of the market, a system would have been introduced which would to be sure have had nothing grand or elevating about it, but which would have been free from the faults which had led to the collapse of the old system.

But to Stein and Scharnhorst it probably seemed entirely impossible to raise by taxation money enough to attract as many volunteers as might be wanted; a voluntary army probably seemed to them much dearer than one levied by conscription. This of course is not really true, except upon the old theory which identifies money with wealth; it must be a very large tax indeed which would be to the citizen a burden equivalent to the exaction by the State of two or three years of his life. But a claim which is new and has never been made before often excites more discontent than the extension of an old claim. The principle that every citizen is under a natural obligation to defend the country had long been acknowledged in Prussia; the existing system was based on it; by it all the military glories of Frederick had been won; other States had borrowed it. Moreover the principle was right and noble. Accordingly it was far more natural to point out the consequences to which this universally acknowledged principle led

and the scandalous injustice of applying it only to the peasantry, than to abandon it for another and less elevated principle which could not be applied without an enormous increase of taxation.

But when we call the principle right let it be clearly understood what the principle is. It is the principle of imposing upon all citizens alike the service of defending the country, not military service in general. Such a principle might have been adopted in England, or in old France, or old Spain, without leading to any important practical consequences. England could not have won Blenheim or Salamanca, or conquered India and Canada, in the strength of such a principle; it could not even have been reasonably applied in the case of the rebellion of our American colonies; it would not have served the purposes of Philip II. or Louis XIV. or Napoleon. It can only be made the foundation of a grand military system in a country which wages no wars but such as are either defensive or can be made to seem defensive. Prussia has never engaged in any distant war; she has never transported troops by sea. Of the three grand wars in which she has tested her system of universal service two were plainly defensive, and that of 1866 had a motive so great and powerful that it did not seem unreasonable to call on the whole nation to take part in it. This was much less true under the old system. Frederick the Great's first war and Frederick William II.'s interferences in Holland and France were unnecessary and aggressive; but, as we have seen, even in that age the military system of Prussia was defensive in

its first conception, and was so handled by its author, Frederick William I., and again with perverse exaggeration by Frederick William III. Accordingly it was possible, even in that age, and when the thought of universal military service still seemed utopian, to lay down and even carry into practice, though with unjust partiality, the principle that was the foundation of it.

These then were the circumstances which suggested to Stein and Scharnhorst the design of a national army. Just at that time and in that country the opportunity presented itself of realising what elsewhere would have been a mere pedantic chimera, viz. the revival of the citizen armies of antiquity. There, as nowhere else, the most serious hindrance was removed, for there the popular mind had become gradually familiar with the thought, and, what was harder still, was now prepared by adversity to endure the realisation of it. But another hindrance, little less serious, remained in the difficulty of devising the machinery such a scheme required; and the merit of Scharnhorst lay, I suppose, in showing the way to overcome this difficulty. He had that mastery of means and detail which is seldom found in conjunction with large conceptions, but which, when it is so found, adapts those conceptions to enter into the composition of a great State and be incorporated with the history of the world, instead of dying a melodious death in some poet's stanza or rhetorician's period. For there are few notions that have been so much ridiculed by military specialists of the very day to which Scharnhorst belonged as this notion of a citizen army. Let us



consider then more closely what is involved in the notion of a citizen army in the circumstances of a great modern State, and what means Scharnhorst found to satisfy the conditions of the case.

By a citizen army is commonly understood what we call a militia, *i. e.* a population who are compelled by the State to devote part of the leisure their occupations leave them to military exercises, so as to be able when their country calls to take the field as soldiers. We know of course that nations in a primitive stage of society, when perhaps war is the main business and pleasure of life and at the same time is carried on in a very rude way, find this method sufficient, and even make great conquests by means of it, especially when their enemies use the same method. But when once war has become a profession and has a science and an art of its own, it is just as well known how completely inferior to professional soldiers such citizen armies show themselves to be. It is well known how empty is the common-place of rhetoric which represents their untutored patriotism as more than a match for trained skill. A specialist like Scharnhorst was in no danger of deluding himself with the notion that a citizen army in this sense of the word was more likely to hold its own in the field against Napoleon than the trained armies which had broken down in the campaign of 1806. He would know that a citizen army would be worthless if it were not an army in the full sense of the word, that is, composed of real professional soldiers, and not merely of young peasants or young students carrying guns.

Was it then possible actually to form the whole

manhood of a nation into professional soldiers? In other words, was it possible to give to every individual, not merely some little practice in handling arms, but a complete military training; to impart to the whole nation both drill, or a perfect mastery of certain mechanical motions, and the higher gift of discipline, which is a soldierly mode of thinking, feeling and acting, the gradual result of belonging to a profession and making part of a great corporate whole which is penetrated with a special purpose and character. This was the problem, and it was one which had never perhaps in any country been seriously considered before. It would soon become plain that such a professional stamp can never be given to men by any teaching bestowed only occasionally and in leisure hours. In order to form the habits of soldiers men must actually be soldiers, that is, they must cease to be civilians and, for some considerable time at least, look upon war as their vocation.

A citizen-soldier, in the old sense of the word, was no great burden on the Government. Being called out only for a few days in the year, he supported himself for the most part; without any overwhelming expenditure the State could furnish pay for him for the short time he was embodied. But a professional soldier receives pay from the State regularly, for he abandons all other pursuits for that of the soldier. The citizen-army contemplated by Scharnhorst would therefore not resemble a militia, but a standing army, in the demand it would make upon the yearly budget of the State. Nevertheless there would be a great difference in this respect

between such an army and an army, like that of England, levied by voluntary contract. Both would require alike the annual disbursement of vast sums, but the citizen-army much less than the other. For the rate of pay is determined in the two cases by considerations altogether different. In the citizen-army the pay of the soldiers is merely their support, and may be lowered according to the exigency of the State down to the lowest sum which will sustain life, whereas the pay of voluntary soldiers is the temptation which induces them to volunteer, and cannot therefore be reduced below the sum which will induce a sufficient number of men to prefer the army to other professions.

When English military critics compare the English Army Estimates with those of Prussia, and exclaim, See how much more our army costs! they are comparing two things which have no relation to each other. In England the Army Estimates do actually give the cost of the Army, that is, the price for which its services are secured, but the Prussian estimates give only the cost of its maintenance. As to the price which Prussia pays for it, that is not given, and to discover it you would need to express in money all the sacrifice, the hardship, the surrender of other plans, the loss to industry and production, caused by compulsory service. There is surely little doubt that if this could be done, the sum would far exceed, even proportionally, that which England pays.

The requisites of the system, as Scharnhorst saw them, appear then to be these. First, the whole nation must be called out; for partial conscription has already ruined us. Secondly, it must be called out,

not for occasional, but for professional service; it must be required to give not a small part of its time, but the whole of its time, to military service; for a mere militia would be far worse even than our old army. The whole nation formed into professional soldiers will have all merits at once, the greatest possible numbers, the highest possible skill, the healthiest possible morale. It will require from the Government large expenditure, but not so large as would be required by a voluntary army; upon the nation it will indeed impose an immense burden, but still a burden which it may be expected to support, because the necessity is plain to all.

But yet—a whole nation turned into professional soldiers! Is then all industry to be suspended? Is not even the ground to be tilled? If so, how shall the army itself be supported? If not, and the soldiers actually return to civil life, what becomes of the distinction drawn between such an army and a militia? The answer suggests itself as soon as the difficulty is clearly stated.

The training necessary to form a professional soldier requires, no doubt, exclusive devotion to the pursuit and abandonment of every other pursuit for a given time. But this time need not itself be very long, that is, no very large portion of a lifetime; the essential thing is that it shall be a continuous portion; that it shall be given to the State in a single handsome donation and not made up gradually by small annual subscriptions. Not even quite so much as this is essential, for when sufficient continuous time has been given to turn the man into a professional, the training once received may be retained

for many years by a short annual rehearsal. The short term of embodiment, which taken by itself will not in any number of years make anything better than a militia, suffices when it follows some years of continuous military service to retain in thorough efficiency a professional army once made. It is also to be remarked, that great as is the superiority of the trained soldier to the amateur, it is a superiority which does not for any long time go on increasing with practice. When youth is past, the soldier, if he has been allowed to marry and become the father of a family, finds his profession difficult and painful to him. This had been especially experienced in Prussia, where the smallness of the population had made it necessary to encourage marriage in the army, and many soldiers accordingly took the field paralysed by the knowledge that their death would bring beggary upon their families. Such soldiers, under the military system of antiquity, would have taken their place in the 'Centuriæ seniorum,' and have been let off with home and garrison duty. It appears then that the principle of universal service does not require that the whole nation shall live in barracks, neglecting industry and overwhelming the finances of the State. Natural and just exemptions take the place of partial and unjust ones. Every person serves, but not every age. Every man is a soldier, but not always with the colours. We can excuse old men altogether and middle-aged men except in extreme emergencies; even men in the latter half of youth need not be called on for very dangerous service. Our regular army will consist entirely of men under thirty, and here again we may

distinguish those whose whole time must be given to military service in order that they may acquire drill and discipline, and those who having acquired these need only to serve for a short time every year in order not to lose them again. In other words, we may distinguish between the old, the Landsturm, the Landwehr, the Reserve, and the Standing Army.

But enough of general reflexions which open vistas of more than was destined to be accomplished for Prussia in that generation. It is time to return to history and trace the gradual course of military reform, as we have followed that of political and social.

In the suggestions of Altenstein and Hardenberg, written down at Riga, is to be found the beginning of this movement, as of the others. The following remarks of Hardenberg put before us as clearly as possible the decline of the old system :

Prussia professed to be a military State, indeed the existence of the army seemed, as Altenstein justly says, the object of the State. How many other important interests were always forced to give way to this ! It fettered industry and natural freedom, and we justified it by arguing that Prussia was a military State. But though the name remained we were far enough from the thing. Even more in this than in other things, at least with even more self-complacency and prejudice for use and wont, we had stood still while others advanced, especially France. With all our ~~indolence~~ and love for the repose of peace, we were proud of our ~~ancestors'~~ heroic deeds, though we did not care to follow their ~~example~~, or to inquire whether the same means would still serve ~~had~~ come into favour through the Seven Years War, so ~~y~~ fought through Frederick's fortune and genius. The ~~ation~~ of the army was visible even in the Polish campaign on the Rhine. Gallantry and the sense of honour ~~ailed~~, but generals and officers, one and all, played the

politician. Intrigues to force a peace took the place at headquarters of sound and energetic plans of operation. The feeling which an army must have if it is to win victory, love of war and of warlike fame, was not prevalent. Love of ease and domesticity, which, proper as it is, should be subordinate in the soldier to a higher duty and passion for honour, gained ground more and more in the long peace under a pacific government, which shunned war when the time for it had arrived, particularly with the older and with the numerous married officers. Want of the needful strictness in discipline, want of stimulus and encouragement of ability and of really useful military activity, had a bad effect. Several of our learned officers (Scharnhorst himself?) did great harm by the distrust they showed of our military power and by injudicious justification and diffusion of it, when they ought rather to have striven to remove or better what interfered with it. That economy in military matters which, whatever may be said in justification of it, is the canker of all good, the faulty arrangement which makes the captain more interested in peace than in war, could not but be increasingly mischievous as prices rose, and produce stinginess and the most harmful parsimony..... Parsimony was the great merit, the perpetual endeavour. Every department of the war-office was occupied with this and with accounts, the outward appearance of the army had considerably gained, but there were great deficiencies in many of the substantial requisites of war. For instance, the fortresses were not on a war footing, and no measures had been taken for provisioning them when it should be necessary. With all our long anticipation of war with France, even Magdeburg and Spandau were not in a state of defence. Single examples of valour and patriotism have proved that these virtues are not extinct in the Prussian army; nevertheless, disaster and inexcusable misconduct and cowardice have deprived the military profession of the public respect and confidence, and to restore this to it is the first and most urgent necessity.

After this preamble Hardenberg lays down the principles of a new military system, drawing, as everywhere, upon the suggestions which had been made by Altenstein. Altenstein had laid it down

that the new army must be organised for purely defensive purposes and be such that it could not be thought of as intended to interfere in foreign quarrels. Hardenberg thinks this not possible, and indeed the past history of Prussia showed the impossibility of it; for had not the army of Frederick William I. been originally intended for defence? Still in the actual financial condition of the State the army would of necessity be reduced much below its old standard. The outline of the scheme to which we were led above by general reflexions floats, though indistinctly, in Hardenberg's mind. He requires a regular army of 45,000 infantry and 25,000 cavalry; then a Reserve of at least 80,000 infantry. But he feels also the necessity of calling out the whole force of the nation, and for this purpose of appealing to the patriotism of the people. He proposes that the towns and the country districts, and in the latter especially the landowners and the officials, should be invited to organise volunteer corps to be employed only within the country. These volunteers are to be treated with much respect, and much freedom of initiative is to be allowed to them; they may be expected to reach the amount of 100,000 men. Thus, for the defence of the country, something like 250,000 men would be available; a total equal to that of the regular army of Frederick the Great in his later years.

Then are laid down some great principles to be observed in the levying of such an army:

All the exemptions hitherto allowed must be abolished without exception. Everyone who does not serve the State in some other appointment must be bound to effective military service in



the regular army and in the reserve. But the military class must be made a true order of honour. Foreigners are only to be admitted when they are of good character and offer themselves voluntarily, and they are then to be treated as if they were natives. But as a rule we must not count upon foreigners. Every degrading punishment must cease. The private soldier must be treated with strictness yet with respect. The term of service must be made short, in order that the pressure be not overwhelming; it must be six years.

In these sentences the new system is clearly described. The abolition of exemptions was all that was necessary to make the army national, since the old army was, as has been explained, not founded on voluntary contract but on partial conscription. And the other principle, which is the correlative of universal service, namely, short service, is stated with equal clearness. Moreover, as the immorality and inhumanity of the old system had arisen entirely from the partial incidence of the Conscription, it is possible, as soon as this partiality is removed, to dispense with brutal severities, because it is for the first time possible to appeal to the sense of duty and honour.

We have here in one view the whole military reform. The impression it made, when it had been carried into effect, upon a bystander, may be seen in the following remarks of Henriette Herz :

The time was past when every simple peasant and every honest citizen of the towns subject to the conscription might fear to have to receive into his house after the expiration of the term of service, instead of a well-conducted son, an inmate corrupted in the depths of his nature by the society of those foreigners, for the most part *mauvais sujets*, from whom the Prussian army was partly recruited, and completely degraded by the lash; the time was when I and many ladies of my acquaintance

would not walk the streets, if we could help it, during certain hours at review time, for fear of being sickened by the repulsive sight of punishment, inflicted often on men of advanced years, who, perhaps, for some neglect of their pigtail which only a professional eye could detect, would be flogged at the order of a lieutenant of fifteen or sixteen, when the least involuntary cry of pain was counted for a new offence to be punished by flogging ; the time, I say, was past when—it was just before 1806—the family of a rich Berlin merchant, whose wife had been surprised in her summer residence at Charlottenburg by the birth of a son, who was accordingly subject to the conscription (Berlin was not), was almost consoled with on the birth of the new comer thus devoted to a melancholy lot. But now the nation began to regard the army as a school, not only for the anticipated war, but also for life.

I have put together for the sake of a clear impression the first suggestion of the military reform and the final result of it; but between the conception and the execution there was a greater distance in this case than in that of the civil reforms. In respect of those we have already been led to perceive that it was one thing to suggest them and say what they ought to be, and quite another to accomplish them. Still more is this true of the vast scheme of a universal conscription which was to turn into soldiers the most peaceful, the most dreamy middle class which was to be found in any nation, and was to do this under the eye of Napoleon and at the very time when the Spanish rising had shaken for a moment the foundation of his greatness. To see how these difficulties were dealt with, we must inquire into the history of the Military Commission. We have recorded the creation of this Commission and the appointment of Scharnhorst to be its President. He began his work about the same time as

Stein; with what feelings, we can gather from a letter which he wrote to Clausewitz on November 27th, 1807.

Nothing would make me happier than to find myself in your society, and yet we should be sorrowful enough; for we are unfortunate, beyond expression unfortunate! Were it possible after a series of disasters, of sufferings without end, to raise ourselves again out of the ruins, who would not willingly stake everything to plant the seed of a new fruit, and who would not gladly die if he could hope that it would spring up vigorous and healthy? And yet, my dear Clausewitz, this is only possible in one way. We must inspire the nation with the feeling of self-dependence, give it the opportunity of acquiring self-knowledge and self-control; only so will it learn to respect itself and force respect from others. To work towards this is all that we can do. To break the chains of prejudice, hasten and tend the new birth and not hamper the freedom of its growth,—our function extends no further.

That is my view of the matter and of our position. I consider myself very little. I have the best will to do what I can, but I am not formed for winning attachment and confidence by personal action. Without my previous knowledge the King promoted me and entrusted the task of reorganisation to me in conjunction with a very mixed Commission. I have not tried to make myself friends, and considering the difference of views and the absence of personal regards, I may expect attempts to alienate the King from me, although he is very gracious and has hitherto treated me with undeserved confidence. At this very moment a quiet and honourable appointment is open to me elsewhere. But feelings of love and gratitude to the King, an indescribable attachment to the destiny of the State and nation, and a repugnance to perpetual change, have hitherto kept me from accepting it, and will do so as long as I can hope to be at all useful here.

Doubtful as our prospects are, yet we have laboured for the internal regeneration of the military system, alike in respect of formation, promotion, practice, and especially spirit; the King has put all prejudice aside, and not only showed himself willing but himself supplied very many ideas appropriate to the new

spirit and arrangements. If he adopts the new sketch, which he has already sanctioned in part, if prejudice does not hinder it from being realised, and if the main object is not missed through alterations or bad instruments, the new army, even if small and unimportant, will handle its profession in another spirit and form a closer and more hearty alliance with the citizens of the State.

The reticent Scharnhorst seldom unbosoms himself in this way, and it is particularly important to notice that his views at the outset are not those of a mere specialist aiming at the improvement of the military machinery, but rather those of a statesman who feels the importance of rousing the national spirit and establishing a wholesome relation between — the army and the nation. He had this great advantage in his work over Stein, that there had never been any difference between him and the King, that his manners were more conciliating, and also that the King, as became a Hohenzollern, was a real judge of questions of military organisation. The first task which engaged the Commission was the consideration of nineteen suggestions laid before it by the King himself. These suggestions show that Frederick William was a convinced reformer in military matters, and that he by no means shared the opinion of Yorck, who could not perceive in the disasters of the last war anything but a freak of fortune or any proof that alterations were needed in the system. Suggestions 3 and 4 run as follows: Would it be expedient in the reorganisation of the army to restore to their original rank and dignity this multitude of invalid generals, of staff and other officers, who are invalid either physically or morally

or both together? And if not, since an alteration here is assuredly necessary, what will be the proper rule of promotion in the army for the future, which may keep us from falling into the old mistake again? Suggestion 5 runs, Ought not an alteration to be made in respect of the admission of the non-noble class, and will not more of such need to be admitted? In Suggestion 7 it is laid down that 'the system of recruiting both for natives and foreigners will need to be completely altered,' and that 'in the new arrangement the number of exempted persons must be reduced.' He also notes the close connexion between the principle of exemptions and the brutality of punishments, remarking (Suggestion 12), As soon as the exemptions are reduced in number, an alteration must take place in the military punishments; they must be made not less rigorous, but less degrading, and for this purpose there must be a revision of the Articles of War.

Another member of the royal house, Prince August, then a prisoner in France, contributed at the same time a Memoir on Military Reform, in which the hand of Clausewitz, the distinguished pupil of Scharnhorst, who shared the Prince's captivity, is probably to be discerned. The leading idea of the reform could hardly be expressed more vigorously than in the following paragraphs:

It is every citizen's duty to defend the State. This principle, admitted as it is theoretically, is subject in most states to large exceptions, owing to the privileges of certain classes and occupations. In modern times it has only been accepted in France and Italy since the Revolution swept those privileges away. It is not to be denied that the State acquires a great military power when

this principle is raised to a law, and every soldier made eligible to the higher ranks. The chief advantages which result from it are (1) that the number of the troops can be increased as far as circumstances allow. It is manifest that in a state where every one is subject to the conscription, more soldiers can be had than in one where many are exempt : (2) that the soldiers no longer consist of the poorest and most despised classes of the citizens, which on the whole have the least interest in the preservation of the State. The richer and more cultivated classes, which have on the whole the greatest interest in the preservation of the State, are for the most part exempt in all countries from the obligation of service without being obliged to render an equivalent : (3) the soldier feels a stronger impulse to distinguish himself when he has the hope of rising to the highest positions, and so obtains a respectable income. For it cannot need any proof that that impulse must be greater on the whole in the state where every one may hope to become a Field Marshal, than in another where most of the soldiers cannot rise above a sergeant-major ; and lastly, (4) the soldiers may, if the war has not entirely exhausted the land, consist solely of young active people, who, on the average, are braver and support better the unceasing hardships of the present mode of carrying on war. Experience fully establishes the decline of valour with advancing years, and the greater endurance of the powers at the age when they are commonly greatest.....

The advantages of the conscription are for the most part only realised when the soldier may hope to rise to the higher posts. Indeed, it is very doubtful whether it would be possible without this to introduce the conscription, since the disaffection it would cause would balance the advantages it would bring. For how could we expect the richer and more cultivated classes to submit to it if they had not the hope of rising to the higher posts ?... But, it will be objected, is not this to deprive the noblesse of one of its privileges, and the Prussian army of its best feature, which is the good quality of its officers ? Where in that case could a noblesse so poor support itself ? As to the justice of such a measure it depends on the question, whether the State is forbidden to take away the privileges it has granted to a class even when it would derive substantial advantages from doing so and perhaps its preservation depends on it. That the quality of the Prussian officers

would suffer by the change is not only doubtful, but may be asserted to be the contrary of the truth....The very competition which would spring up between the noble and the citizen class might be used to maintain the ambition of the officers. And that citizens as well as nobles may be actuated by principles of honour is strikingly shown by the example of the present French officers.

The King's suggestions were promptly taken into consideration by the Commission. Its answer to his important 5th Suggestion is particularly worth reading :

Nothing but attainments and education in peace, distinguished gallantry, activity and comprehension in war, can establish a claim to the post of officer. Accordingly, all individuals in the whole nation who possess these qualities may claim the highest posts of military rank. Hitherto, through the restriction of these honours to a single class, all the talents and acquirements of the rest of the nation were lost to the army, and this class found itself relieved of the necessity of acquiring military talents, being raised to the highest military posts by birth and long life. This is the explanation of the great inferiority in culture of the officers to all other classes. And this is why the army was regarded as a state in the State, hated and in some degree despised by the other classes, whereas it ought to be the union of all the moral and physical energies of the nation. The comparison of Prussia with the neighbouring states which are forming themselves, which in part consist of former citizens of the Prussian State, and which have escaped these errors, would make our former condition still more burdensome, so that a change is necessary for this reason if for no other.

In earlier times the exclusive right of the nobility to the post of officer did not exist in the Prussian State ; under the Elector Frederick William half the officers came from the non-noble class, so too under King Frederick I. Further promotion being by seniority, all competition was prevented ; nothing was to be gained by exertion ; a good *physique* secured all the objects of ambition. The State had no means of keeping the army in a good condition

but punishments and arbitrary rewards. The former are easily evaded, the latter difficult to apply, and seldom reconcileable with the means at the disposal of the State.

Such a description as this may well suggest the exclamation which breaks from Ranke: 'It seems astonishing that the army formed on the arrangements of the great Frederick should leave so much to be desired.' That the whole civil system of Frederick needed to be swept away as the first step towards the regeneration of the country, might be explained by the supposition that he sacrificed civil well-being to the perfection of his military system. But his army was the great abuse of all. And after all that has been said about the intelligence of the modern Prussian officer and of Frederick the Great as a friend of enlightenment, it may particularly surprise the English reader to learn that of all the abuses of Frederick's army the worst was the extreme ignorance of the officers. Yet there is no controversy about the fact. A certain army-chaplain, Lafontaine, relates that after a historical lecture which he once delivered to the officers he was taken aside by a valiant captain, who said to him, 'You tell us of things that happened thousands of years ago, heaven knows where. Are you sure you are not hoaxing us? How did you find it all out?' And when he had listened to the explanation he said, 'Strange! I thought things had always gone on as they do here in Prussia!' We observe too that, like the abuses of the civil administration, the abusive monopoly of the noblesse in the army had increased rather than diminished in the time of Frederick the Great.



The earliest document in which the ideas which were occupying so many military men took shape is Scharnhorst's 'Memoir on the Defence of the Country and on a National Militia,' which bears date July 31st, 1807. It points out that the difficulty of maintaining a large army lies not merely in the diminution of territory and population but in the impoverishment of the treasury. 'A population of 5,000,000 would suffice for an army of 120,000—150,000 men, $2\frac{1}{2}$ —3 out of every 100 serving. But for the present the financial condition of the State will not allow it to raise the army to the point which the population would admit....An army of 65,000—70,000 men would perhaps appropriately combine both advantages, of a becoming parsimony and a moderate defensive force.' 'But,' he adds, 'at the same time it is extremely important to make arrangements by which it may be possible promptly to increase the army, and particularly the infantry. This may be done in the easiest manner as follows: (1) Let each company have one officer more than is necessary; (2) In each company let there be dismissed yearly in the first three years 20 men, still fit for service, and afterwards 10 men yearly, and let the men dismissed be replaced by others.'

We have here the first suggestion of that plan of passing the whole population through the army, which is often described as a contrivance for frustrating the condition imposed by Napoleon in the treaty of September, 1808, by which the army of Prussia was to be reduced to 42,000 men. It is evident that Napoleon's interference was less important than is supposed, since the poverty of the

Government would in any case have prevented it from maintaining a much larger army.

Scharnhorst then goes on to say :

A large number of our military thinkers have always been in favour of a militia. It might serve two purposes : (1) to maintain the peace of the country, to support the police, to protect the land against the attacks of the plunderers, and prevent hostile incursions ; (2) to defend the land in conjunction with regular troops. If his Majesty should find such an institution adapted to our future position, the question would rise, whether the brothers and sons, the owners of houses, estates, persons of considerable property, the sons of the king's officials, &c., in short, a part of the exempted young people, which in the exempted towns would be very considerable, could not be organised in such a militia and devoted simply to the former object, in order to be applied to the latter only in case it should afterwards be found convenient. The execution of such a plan would be less difficult now than later, because at present a similar institution exists in the towns beyond the Weichsel.

This militia would (1) relieve the standing army of the ordinary garrison service, and so allow the troops to give more time to field-service and to learning to fire, (2) would maintain order in the great towns if in the case of a distant war any province were denuded of troops, (3) such a militia might, if a favourable opportunity for the defence of the country should arise, be very soon increased without attracting attention, and serve with the standing army.

As the former passage contains the first suggestion of the reserve, so we have here evidently the germ of the Landwehr.

Just a month later (August 31st) Scharnhorst laid before the King a 'Provisional Sketch of the Constitution of an Army of Reserve,' which in consequence of some objections made by the King was afterwards reconsidered by the Commission, revised and laid before him again with the altered title of

‘Provisional Sketch of the Constitution of the Provincial Troops.’ In its second shape it is introduced by an instructive preamble, which commences as follows :

A new institution must be based on principles quite simple and evident to every one if it is to lead to great results.

Then follows the passage already quoted, in which it is asserted that it had always been a principle of the Prussian military constitution, that every inhabitant of the State is a born defender of it, and that the greatness of Prussia had been a consequence of this principle. The preamble then proceeds :

A closer investigation shows that such a system, though it gives a command of the men capable of service, requires a great expense in disciplining them and holding them ready for war, since a force thus levied by compulsion does not submit to great sacrifices through love for the country and its institutions, but can only be led to do so by discipline and a warlike spirit created by war.

For great, rich, and conquering states accordingly this constitution of the standing army may be the best, but it does not suit the peculiar requirements of the middle states. Where these have a good constitution, a government which knows how to win love and respect, and make its value felt by the people, it has a resource which is wanting to the great states which are not threatened with destruction, namely, the voluntary devotion to the safety of the State, of the property and rights of its inhabitants. No independent nation will submit to the yoke of another without exhausting all its resources, if it is well governed and directed. Accordingly, in middle states sacrifices may be counted on where the war is for existence, which in some respects supply the place not only of discipline but also of that warlike spirit of the standing army which is increased by war. Middle states therefore may call out for their own defence the whole mass of their men

capable of service, if they have been previously practised in the use of arms, provided with the necessary means, and the indispensable military discipline.

Accordingly as the armies of the greater states cost more and are therefore proportionally limited in number, and besides cannot in war throw themselves in such great masses on a middle state, owing to the difficulty of maintenance, there arises in the case of a war of conquest, at least in certain circumstances for a short time, a sort of equilibrium between the two kinds of state.

For these reasons the middle states must have a totally different military constitution from the prevailing ones.

We have already remarked how these principles of popular war were, as it were, revealed to Europe by the Spanish rising. But this passage, in which they are stated with incomparable precision and force, was written, as the reader will observe, long before the Spanish rising and long before Fichte's lectures. It is to be observed at the same time that the statement completely avoids the error into which so many philosophers and enthusiasts fell, of supposing that patriotism would supply the place of military discipline.

Scharnhorst goes on to distinguish between the functions of the standing army and of that force which it had now been decided to call the Provincial Troops. He then adds :

If the standing army is small and the Provincial Troops proportionally numerous, this will be for a time advantageous to the State, for by being called upon to spend less it will the sooner restore its defective resources and recover the power of self-defence. So we need never fear that the standing army will be too small ; on the other hand, we must give the Provincial Troops an organisation which may assimilate them to the standing force in drill, &c., and that this may not attract attention we must make them at first very weak in privates and only begin gradually to

strengthen them when the officers, commissioned and non-commissioned, are disciplined.

He then raises a very important question :

The question has arisen whether it is better to put the men intended for the Provincial Troops through the standing army or form them without any such preparation. The Commission has chosen the latter course.

In the present state of affairs everything seems to turn upon the closest possible union between the nation and the government, upon a treaty, so to speak, being concluded between the government and the nation, which may inspire confidence and love for the Constitution and make it deserve to be independent. This spirit cannot exist without some freedom in the creation and preparation of the means for the preservation of independence. He who does not enjoy this feeling cannot value it nor make sacrifices for it.

A national militia may be inspired with such a spirit if it supports, arms, clothes and drills itself; but it will never do so if its independence is paralysed by an imagined constraint.

If we decided to put the men of the militia through the standing army we should not be able—if, for example, the term of service were fixed at six years—to begin to create a militia till six years hence.

In this point we see Scharnhorst's plan deviating from the system which was ultimately adopted, of which it is a capital point that the Landwehr is composed only of those who have served their term first with the army and then with the reserve. But we may observe that his reasons are drawn in part at least from the exceptional circumstances of the time. This is visible too in the following considerations which he adds :

A militia which has gone through the standing army will always be regarded by other states (*i.e.* by Napoleon) as a part of the standing army, as an institution calculated for foreign affairs,

and not as a National Militia, Landwehr, an internal supplementary police. With the Militia proposed by the Commission it will be possible to introduce a universal conscription without exemption ; but this will be very difficult if each individual is to serve in the standing army.

It seems almost incredible that Scharnhorst's plan, so manifestly adopted for the purpose of disguise, of representing his Militia as only a kind of police, has been seized upon as a pretext for denying, in the face of the passages just quoted, that he had any notion of a popular army. The reader will not be surprised to learn that the inventor of this misrepresentation is our friend Schön, and that the object of it is to secure to himself and his East Prussian friends the credit of having originated the modern military system of Prussia.

The Provisional Sketch, which is introduced by this preamble, is contained in a number of Articles, of which the first runs as follows : *All the inhabitants of the State are born defenders of it.* A distinction is then drawn between those citizens who arm; clothe and drill themselves, and those who are armed, clothed and drilled at the expense of the State. The latter, it is said, compose the standing army; the former compose the Provincial Troops, whose function it is to maintain the internal peace of the country, and to defend it against attack, and who only leave their province when this is required for the protection of the Monarchy. These Provincial Troops are to have their own commander and their own independent organisation, which is described in a series of Articles. It will be evident that this scheme is materially different from that

which was ultimately adopted, and that the Provincial Troops here contemplated would be more like the English Militia than like the Prussian Landwehr.

One would be glad to hear more of the relations between Stein and Scharnhorst than our authorities tell us. Neither of the two men was at all in the habit of saying or writing more than was necessary; but if Stein's position required him to form and express an opinion upon a good many persons and things, Scharnhorst's natural reticence was not counteracted even in this way, and almost all that he may have thought beyond the limits of his specialty seems to have perished. Stein too, as it happens, has left no detailed opinion about Scharnhorst. Several slight traces, however, support the tradition that there was a remarkable harmony and sympathy between them. This tradition lives in two slight anecdotes, which perhaps it would be difficult to authenticate. The one is that Scharnhorst said to a certain General Hofmann, 'I only know two persons who are entirely without the fear of man, Minister Stein and General Blücher.' The other is—it is at any rate well imagined—that he used to try to cure Stein of his irritability, and that Stein answered him, 'Do you suppose I do not know myself to be hasty and irritable? But if I could unlearn that I should be an old woman.'

Scharnhorst's Provisional Sketch now passes under the inspection of Stein. It was also, perhaps at Stein's request, reported on by Schön. Both seem to have considered that it did not go far enough. Schön feared that the effect of a militia

of well-to-do persons by the side of a standing army. of poor people would be to lower the latter in estimation; the militia he thought would come to be regarded as the national army and the standing troops as mere mercenaries. He demands that the Provincial Troops shall pass first through the standing army; 'thus,' he says, 'they will have a good school.' Stein laid down the following principles:

(1) That all exemptions of particular places or classes should be abolished, and that those which had been conferred on particular trades should be rigorously examined and revised; (2) that all inhabitants of the State between eighteen and twenty-five years should be liable to serve in the standing army according to the determination of the lot; (3) and that all not called out, whether as not having drawn the lot or as having passed the age or as exempted on account of their occupation, should be required to enter the Reserve.

It was on January 5th, 1808, that the criticisms of Schön and Stein were handed in.

I have given large extracts from the documents in which these fundamental questions of military reform were discussed, because so great a military reform was ultimately realised, not because the discussion led to any great immediate results. A considerable number of minor reforms were indeed adopted in the course of 1808. The revision of the Articles of War took place, and new arrangements were made about military punishments and also about promotion. But nothing in the nature of a Landwehr was called into existence at this time. The Prussian Landwehr dates not from 1808 but from 1813, and the circumstances which called it

into existence will occupy us later. All such schemes were suspended for the present by that treaty of September, 1808, which decided at the same time the fall of Stein. In a secret article of that treaty the King engaged, in order to avoid anything which might give France ground of suspicion, not to maintain for ten years, to be reckoned from January 1st, 1809, more troops than the following ;

| | |
|---|------------|
| 10 Regiments of Infantry, not to exceed | 22,000 men |
| 8 Regiments of Cavalry, not to exceed | 8,000 „ |
| 1 Corps of Artillery, sappers and miners, | |
| not to exceed - - - - - | 6,000 „ |
| Guard, not to exceed - - - - - | 6,000 „ |
| Total - - - - - | 42,000 |

and at the same time he engaged that within the same ten years no extraordinary levies of Militia or Civic Guard, nor any other muster should take place, which might be intended to increase the force above mentioned.

Under Stein's reformed scheme of Administration Scharnhorst became Minister of War, which office he held till 1810, when he was driven from office by Napoleon as Stein had been before. But he had so far succeeded by his peculiar reticence and show of insignificance in deceiving Napoleon, that the King found it possible to arrange with his successor that 'Major General v. Scharnhorst should remain, so far as it could be done secretly, in the same relation to the officials of the War Department as hitherto in respect of the Ordinances and initiative of the more important matters of business.' He also held after this time the post in which Count

Moltke has been so famous, being Chief of the Staff.

As in this chapter I have followed the principle of laying before the reader as many extracts as possible, I shall close it with an account of the reforms introduced into his department, which Scharnhorst himself laid before the King in the year 1809, when the persistent opposition of the military conservatives seemed for a moment to have shaken the King's confidence in him.

Comparison between the former and the present conduct of business in the upper part of the Military Department.

The former administration was divided between the Adjutants, Generals, the War Collegium and the Military Department (the Governors and Inspectors). Hence it wanted unity, comprehensiveness and rapidity, that is, the main features of a good administration. The former Adjutant-General, usually an Infantry Officer, without high military knowledge, laid before the King without preparation or deliberation all questions of Engineering and Artillery, of the higher dispositions concerning war, and all details concerning the Infantry and Cavalry, &c. His Majesty commonly received adequate information on no other subject but the lower departments of the Infantry service. This is now entirely changed. An officer of the General Staff elaborates the affairs which concern the higher parts of war, military science proper, another the personal matters, a third the questions which concern recruiting and formation and other internal details. All these affairs are brought under one point of view before the Chief of the General War Department, and discussed with the superior officers and an officer of Engineers and Artillery before they are laid before His Majesty. This is done every day, to prevent the accumulation of arrears. Economical and financial affairs are entirely separated, and have their own Head of Department, who is present when affairs are laid before His Majesty. By this means rapidity and unity are combined, whereas under the former system it was in most cases necessary to adopt whatever was suggested,

and there was formed a mechanical groove for the whole internal administration and service, everything moving according to the old routine. The War College too was nothing but a business office, generally filled with invalids or such persons as had lost the ambition to serve any more as effective officers. Its object was the maintenance of the old system, and from it an invalid un-military spirit diffused itself through the army. Under this system His Majesty was not in a condition to direct the military arrangements so as to secure a steady progressive movement. From the deceased King's time the stamp of this system was deeply impressed upon the army. At the time of His Majesty's accession it combined in many respects the disadvantages of a militia with those of a standing army. It was behind in everything except tactical exercises. In 1806 the Prussian army had the worst muskets in Europe.

Who could have supposed that in 1805 provision had not been made for an internal defence of the country and especially of the Elbe? And yet even in 1806 nothing had been done towards it, and the result was the greatest disasters of every kind. It was in vain that His Majesty had wished even earlier to have a militia and had expressed his wish to have all defensive measures taken. A Military Department only existed to make arrangements according to the regular form; there was no regulating direction which, taking account at once of internal and external conditions, could have laid proposals suitable to the occasion before His Majesty. The decreeing and executing Power not being combined, His Majesty never had a comprehensive view of the internal military arrangements. Thus in 1807 we saw His Majesty in the province of Prussia paying daily for 47,800 portions and 29,100 rations, and yet not opposing to the enemy more troops than on an average 15,000, for some time not 10,000. An astonishing fact! which proves that in no European State have the means of war been worse or less efficiently used than in Prussia, and that things remained just as they were when the existence of the State was at stake. With a decent direction these resources might have opposed to the enemy far more than twice as many combatants. But accustomed to routine and without expedients for special emergencies the authorities excused themselves in the most ridiculous manner.

General Lestocq's corps had to make the winter campaign of 1806 without cloaks, although they were ready in the autumn. They were not given out till the spring, when they were of no use!

When, in the summer of 1807, His Majesty at Memel did me the honour to put me upon the Commission of Reorganisation, I tried to make out the actual condition of the troops; a great number of useless Artillery and commissariat horses were still kept, which should have been sold directly after the Peace. I spoke of it to Cabinet Councillor Beyme, and afterwards to Minister Stein; and they suggested to His Majesty to make the retrenchments. But the War Collegium would have it that all troops which were not at home in Prussia should remain mobilised; they could not imagine troops not mobile and yet not in a settled condition within their old quarters. So I had to come forward against the War Collegium, because Minister Stein called on me to support the opinion I had expressed to him. The affair was laid before the Commission, and only in that way could the retrenchment be effected. This showed Minister Stein and Cabinet Councillor Beyme that they could procure the retrenchments which the State so absolutely required by means of the Commission, and it was only so that His Majesty was enabled to keep the troops without absolutely disbanding them until the evacuation of the other Provinces.

After laying before Your Majesty my humble justification of the new organisation of the upper part of the Military Department and its administration, I must go on to speak of the new arrangements in the army itself, since every conceivable objection that can be urged against this has been laid before Your Majesty, as I think I have had many occasions to observe. I might be the easier about this, as most of the ideas of the new system are simply Your Majesty's ideas carried into effect by the Commission. But how few know this! And even for Your Majesty many points require fuller explanation.

What would the adversaries of the new system have? Are noblemen's children to have the privilege of being appointed officers in their crass ignorance and feeble childhood, while men of information and vigour are put below them without hope of preferment? So much the better, no doubt, for the noble families,

but ill for the army ; it will never win the respect of the nation, and it will be the laughing-stock of the other educated classes. Or is promotion to go not according to attainments with young men and desert with the older? Is old age to monopolise the higher posts? That means that active, lively, ambitious men, whose mind soon wears out their body, should be kept back, and indolent, phlegmatic blockheads, with few exceptions, come to the front. If many otherwise respectable men think that discipline cannot be properly maintained if any ensign of sixteen and brutal non-commissioned officer is not allowed to flog any old soldier within an inch of his life for an insignificant, innocent mistake in exercise or dress, this can hardly be regarded as anything but a prejudice.... If the nation is to regard itself as the defender of the country, it must not in this new quality be threatened with the most degrading punishments, which are only very rarely inflicted on the dregs of the population. But if we want to have back the foreigners, the vagabonds, sots, thieves, rogues and other criminals out of all Germany, who ruin the nation and make the army hateful to the citizen, and then desert as soon as the march begins, then, no doubt, we shall not be able to do without the old punishments. For infamous fellows we shall want infamous punishments....

To raise and vivify the spirit of the army, to unite it more closely with the nation, and direct it to its great and important vocation, this is the principle which lies at the bottom of the new arrangements, and it should be studied first by those who would judge of them.

The abolition of infamous punishments, upon which Scharnhorst lays so much stress, is inseparably connected, as we have seen, with the universal conscription. This again is inseparably connected with a short term of service and with the fourfold division of the army into Standing Army, Reserve, Landwehr and Landsturm. The whole system is plainly present to Scharnhorst's mind, but he cannot venture to announce, much less to decree, all that he wishes. The Landwehr must be renounced for the

present, but in the meanwhile an Administrative Reform, similar to that which is carried out in the State by Stein, can be introduced into the army, and when Napoleon requires that the army should be reduced to 42,000, Scharnhorst can seize the opportunity of introducing, what he had intended to introduce in any case, the principle of short service, and in this way can create the reserve.



CHAPTER V.

THE INTERCEPTED LETTER.

THE *Moniteur* for September 8th, 1808, begins with a column of news from New York, referring principally to the making of roads and canals in the United States, and concluding with the remark that 'the emigration of the Catholics of Ireland and Scotland has become very considerable since the British Parliament has rejected the last bill in favour of that class of citizens. In the month of May alone there have arrived 240 Catholic emigrants at the single port of Philadelphia.' The second column is devoted to Prussia, and contains intelligence dated Berlin, August 26th. It runs as follows :

Un assesseur Prussien, nommé Koppe, était désigné comme un agent d'intrigues. Le Maréchal Soult ayant été dans le cas de le faire arrêter et conduire à Spandau, on a saisi ses papiers où l'on a trouvé l'original de la lettre qu'on va lire.

Nous croyons devoir la publier comme un monument des causes de la prospérité et de la chute des Empires. Elle révèle la manière de penser du ministère Prussien et elle fait connaître particulièrement M. de Stein, qui a pendant longtemps exercé le

ministère et qui est aujourd'hui presque exclusivement chargé de la direction des affaires. On plaindra le roi de Prusse d'avoir des ministres aussi malhabiles que pervers.

Then follows the original letter accompanied with a French translation. I give the latter here.

Königsberg, le 15 août, 1808.

Par la lettre officielle que M. de Koppe aura l'honneur de remettre à V. A. elle apprendra tout ce qui a rapport à nos affaires de finance ; je ne me permettrai que quelques observations sur notre état et notre position en général.

D'après le conseil des comtes de G. et W. (according to the German it should have been, du Comte de G. L. W.) on a donné itérativement des ordres au prince G^e de proposer une alliance et un corps de troupes auxiliaires et de demander une diminution ou un délai pour les contributions ; on a voulu que le prince s'éloignât d'une manière décente dans le cas où l'Empereur partirait pour de nouvelles entreprises. Si dans les circonstances actuelles, où nous pourrions être utiles à l'Empereur, S. M. n'accepte pas nos propositions elle prouve que son dessein est de nous anéantir et alors il faut nous attendre à tout. *L'exaspération augmente tous les jours en Allemagne ; il faut la nourrir et chercher à travailler les hommes. Je voudrais bien qu'on pût entretenir des liaisons dans la Hesse et dans la Westphalie et qu'on se préparât à de certains évènements : qu'on cherchât à maintenir des rapports avec des hommes d'énergie et bien intentionnés et que l'on pût mettre ces gens-là en contact avec d'autres.* Dans le cas où V. A. pourrait me donner des renseignements à cet égard je la prie de vouloir bien me renvoyer M. Koppe ou un autre homme de confiance.

Les affaires de l'Espagne font une impression très-vive ; elles prouvent ce que depuis longtemps on aurait dû entrevoir. Il serait très-utile d'en répandre les nouvelles d'une manière prudente. On considère ici la guerre avec l'Autriche comme inévitable. Cette lutte décidera du sort de l'Europe et par conséquent du nôtre. Quel est le succès que V. A. en attend ? Les projets que l'on avait au printemps de 1807 pourrait aujourd'hui se réaliser. Où est actuellement M. Meuring ?

Le comte de Vinc¹...vous fera bientôt une visite et il y restera quelque temps.

L'Electeur court dans les circonstances actuelles grand risque de se perdre lui-même avec ses propriétés ; il devrait cependant chercher à mettre l'une et l'autre de ces choses à l'abri. Je crains beaucoup qu'il ne soit à la fin la victime de son irrésolution et de son avidité. M. de Jacobi n'est pas encore arrivé ; on l'attend aujourd'hui. Son voyage a été long et difficile. On s'est enfin décidé à nommer Ancillon pour instituteur du Prince Royal. L'exécution demandera encore du temps ; mais c'est toujours un pas, ce qui est beaucoup pour notre irrésolution.

Ce n'est pas bien que la de H. (read U.) ait abandonné sa première idée ; la société d'une telle dame, éprouvée par l'expérience et les malheurs, aurait été d'une très-grande utilité à la R(eine).

Il faut que les finances de la maison soient dans un très-mauvais état, car on ne me paie pas les 13000 florins que l'on me doit pour la terre que j'ai vendue, il y a quelques années ; je voudrais bien que cet argent me rentrât ; car on en a besoin par le temps qui court et il faut que je m'arrange d'après mes revenus.

J'apprends qu'une partie de vos amis quitte le Holstein.

Le général Blucher est très-faible ; on a dû lui envoyer à Colberg le colonel de Bulow pour son assistance.

Je suis, etc.

De votre altesse, etc.

Signé, STEIN.

A S. A. le prince de Sayn
Wittgenstein, à Dobberon.



This startling revelation to the whole world through the *Moniteur* of the new Spanish policy of Stein was unknown to Stein himself at the time of the Czar's visit to Königsberg, though it was the topic of Niebuhr's correspondence a week before.

¹ Not Vincke, as the reader may suppose, and as has been often asserted, but a certain Count Vincent.

The Czar left for Erfurt on September 20th, and Stein was to follow him on the next day. But on the morning of the 21st arrived the *Moniteur*, and new resolutions had to be formed.

On reading this letter immediately after Niebuhr's commentary on it, our first reflexion is how glaringly mistaken part of that commentary is. Niebuhr is sure that Stein's expressions (evidently those relating to the expediency of spreading discontent and to the lessons to be learnt from Spain,) were merely the passing flash of a mind very rapid in conceiving and dismissing new ideas. The description of Stein's rapid manner, given by one who knew him personally, would interest us more if it were not coupled with an assertion which we see to be completely untrue. So far from being a passing flash, these expressions conveyed a fixed determination which possessed his whole mind at this time; and it takes us by surprise to find that Niebuhr was so entirely ignorant of the views of the very party with which he was most closely associated. Not only the thoughts, but the very words of this letter are to be found in the other documents written by Stein about this time, and I confess that instead of that Napoleonic mobility of thought attributed to him by Niebuhr, I have been struck, here as elsewhere, by his habit of repeating over and over again stereotyped phrases. The substance of this letter written on August 15th had been contained in a report which he wrote on the 11th, and from which extracts have been given above. Indeed I find in that report an explanation of one sentence in the letter which Pertz seems to misunderstand.



What does he refer to when he says that by the advice of Counts G. and W. (French version) or of Count G. L. W. (German original) instructions have been given to Prince Wilhelm to propose to Napoleon an alliance and a body of auxiliary troops in return for a reduction of the pecuniary claim and a prolongation of the term? The report in question begins as follows :

The Prince of Ponte Corvo and M. de Bourrienne consider the present moment suitable to renew the proposals with respect to the alliance and the furnishing of a corps of troops under the command of a French General.

He proceeds to give his own opinion thus :

Accordingly we must instruct the Prince (Wilhelm) to represent again the increasing exhaustion of the Prussian Provinces and the consequent impossibility of being useful to France as Prussia was useful in the time when friendship subsisted between the two Powers, and to repeat the offer of a reasonable arrangement in respect of the contribution and of the formation of an alliance.

It will be seen that this report agrees entirely with the letter except that it speaks of the Prince of Ponte Corvo (Bernadotte), and M. de Bourrienne, instead of Count G. L. W. or Counts G. and W. But we learn from a note in Pertz¹ that in the MS. of the report, the names Counts v. Golz and v. Wartensleben were originally written, but had been crossed out and the names of the Frenchmen substituted for them. It seems then that in the letter the French version ('des comtes G. et W.') is right, and that the German has been misprinted in the *Moniteur* and should have been

¹ Note 86 to Book III. (Vol. II.).

der Grafen G. und W. instead of *des Grafen G. L. W.*

But was Niebuhr equally mistaken in thinking, as he evidently does, that Stein is shown by his letter to have left the right course, to have lost his head, and to be rushing on destruction? It is certainly natural to think that it was an act of reckless imprudence to commit to written words, words so exceedingly distinct and not written in cipher, such dangerous plans, and then to send them across a country in which a French army was still quartered. This charge of imprudence was loudly made at the time, and Pertz has replied to it in arguments which may be considered those of Stein himself. He points out in the first place that though the practice of seizing an enemy's letters in order to find out his plans is universally justified in war, there was at this time no war between France and Prussia, that Prussia was an independent State at peace with France, and the letter was seized within the Prussian territory. He doubts whether Napoleon's own letters to his officials would have better borne printing in the English newspapers than Stein's letter in the *Moniteur*. But to point out that the French acted lawlessly is not to defend Stein's prudence. No one knew their lawlessness better than he; he could not seriously doubt that they would seize his letter if they could gain any object by doing so; he knew that he had enemies who were in communication with the French and who had begun to understand what dangerous plans he meditated. But secondly Pertz urges that Stein took sufficient precautions against the seizure of the letter. The bearer of it was no nameless or



unknown person. He was a certain Assessor Koppe, the son of a well-known Göttingen Professor, whom Stein's father-in-law had employed to defend his conduct in the command of the Hannoverian army in 1803. He himself had carried the Daru Convention to Paris in March, and we have recently seen him reporting to Stein against the Tugendbund. To this person Stein, on dismissing him, had given the most particular instructions to use the utmost circumspection. He had suggested to him in what parts of the carriage he might most conveniently conceal the papers he carried. Koppe, it appears, neglected these instructions altogether and carried the papers openly by his side. In passing through Berlin he visited his own family, with whom a certain French spy named Vigneron had an acquaintance, and on recommencing his journey was stopped near Spandau and yielded up his papers without resistance. He was afterwards conveyed to Fort Joux in the Jura, where he occupied the cell which not long before had witnessed the death of another better-known victim of the same dark tyranny, Toussaint L'Ouverture.

This is good so far, but what mean Niebuhr's mysterious allusions to dangerous people with whom Stein in his simplicity is allowing himself to be mixed up? Who are these dangerous people? Pertz suggests Koppe or Wittgenstein or Nagler. But Niebuhr, as if to guard against the supposition that he meant Koppe, puts at the end of his letter an express assertion that Koppe was a harmless man. Nagler seems to have done Stein some harm afterwards, but I know no reason for connecting him

with this business. We cannot suppose, what is the most obvious interpretation, that he is thinking of the leaders of the war-party, for these were Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, the most honest and able advisers that Stein could have had, besides that when Niebuhr left Königsberg no war-party existed and he evidently has not heard of the formation of one since. But what of Wittgenstein? I do not know whether it can be proved that Stein's intercourse with Wittgenstein began before Niebuhr's departure, but it seems not unlikely that it did so, and if there was anything objectionable in the character of Wittgenstein, Niebuhr was likely to know of it, for finance was Niebuhr's special department. And if he had formed an unfavourable opinion of the Prince, he would be particularly pained to read a letter in which Stein made him the confidant of such dangerous secrets.

Now what sort of person was Wittgenstein? The following description of him, the reader will be startled to learn, is from Stein's own autobiography. In his enumeration of his expedients for raising money, Stein mentions negotiations with the Elector of Hessen on the basis of a mortgage or sale of Domains, which Prince Wittgenstein proposed in order to give himself position and importance, and then proceeds thus:

Prince Wittgenstein had all the qualifications for procuring himself an advantageous position in life without acquirements, real worth, or merit; crafty, cold, calculating, persistent, supple to sycophancy. He realised the maxim *qu'un vrai courtisan doit être sans honneur et sans humeur*; he aimed at money and secret bed-

chamber influence. He began his career at the court of Carl Theodor (*i. e.* the Elector of Bavaria) at the card parties of the antechamber, next seeking a union with the Abbess of Lindau, the Elector's natural daughter, soon after in 1792 he was arrested for a suspicious connexion with the French Ambassador at Mainz by a resolution of the Electoral Ambassadors assembled at Ehrenbreitstein to elect Franz II. Released he became High Steward to the late Queen, member of the set of Madame Rietz, whom he accompanied to Italy; then Ambassador at Cassel and head of a banking-house for which he procured the capital from the Elector on his elder brother's guarantee; intimate with Count Haugwitz and H. v. Hardenberg, to whom he advanced money, Commissioner of the bankrupt Plettenberg estate, which he embroiled still further; since the Battle of Auerstädt living partly at Hamburg, partly at Königsberg; connected at the former place with Bernadotte, while at the latter he made advances to me with his project of a loan.

Surely it is startling to find Stein writing with such easy communicativeness to a person of this character. It is true that the description was written many years later and when Wittgenstein had become an object of dislike to all the patriotic party. But many of the facts stated in it must have been known to Stein in 1808; he must have known of the affair at Ehrenbreitstein, of the intimacy with Haugwitz and Madame Rietz. Is it not remarkable that he should confide his plans of a rising against the French to one who had been suspected in 1792 of a traitorous connexion with the French, and who at this very time was in communication with Bernadotte? But suppose that Stein believed that suspicion to have been ungrounded, suppose he believed Wittgenstein to be a man of good character, could he possibly have believed him to be the kind of person who would sympathise with his

warlike views? Everything about Wittgenstein reminds us of the courtier-party who were leagued against Stein and whose strongest principle was subserviency to France. Now we have already hinted that in all probability the courtier-party were just at this moment bent upon ruining Stein by making the French acquainted with his plan of insurrection. When the letter appeared in the *Moniteur* it was the universal cry of Stein's friends that he had been betrayed by this party. Thus for instance writes his old friend Count Reden on September 24th, 'You are the victim of a deliberate, deep-laid plot...Of that no unbiassed eye can be in doubt.' And in this way Pertz represents the affair, giving us sufficiently to understand that this was the view which Stein himself took of it. Whether the fact was actually so or not, it is certain that just such was the course that might have been expected of the courtier-party. They were bitterly hostile to Stein, and his declaration in favour of an insurrection was just what their hostility wanted. Of another party we might hesitate to suppose that they would call in the enemies of Prussia against a brave statesman who had made sacrifices in the common cause. But it was the party of what is called 'society,' its opinions were well-bred crazes, its behaviour had the violent puerility of an aristocratic mob. Its maxim now was that 'there was every reason for placing entire confidence in the French,' and accordingly it paraded its devotion to the conqueror without shame or restraint. There was therefore at the least reason enough why Stein should be cautious of giving utterance to his real thoughts on foreign

policy in the hearing of any one who might be supposed to sympathise with this party. And yet Wittgenstein was a courtier, he had been chamberlain to the late Queen and had been intimate with Haugwitz and Madame Rietz. When we consider all this, it seems easy to understand what Niebuhr says of Stein's unsuspecting frankness and rash confidences. Of the knowledge of mankind he seems to have wanted one half. Keen enough, as far as appears, in discerning merit, he was not quick to detect its opposite, and wanted the instinctive caution and reticence which that crisis demanded. Niebuhr objected to the Tugendbund, on the ground that Germans did not excel in secret societies. If so, Stein was national even in his weaknesses, for evidently he shines more in legislation than in conspiracy.

In supposing that Stein's indiscretion in the matter of this letter was twofold and that it consisted quite as much in the choice of his confidant as in allowing his confidences to fall into the hand of the enemy, we not only follow Niebuhr's cautious intimations and Stein's own estimate of Wittgenstein's character, but are confirmed by the direct testimony of one personally connected with Stein. Count Senfft, at this time Saxon Ambassador at Paris, had married Louise, a daughter of Stein's sister Werthern. In his Memoirs, written in 1814 (though not published till 1863) and dedicated to his wife, the incident is referred to in the following terms—we may consider the passage as throwing light on those views of the Countess Werthern which Niebuhr refers to:—

At this time appeared the letter of the Baron de Stein, then directing Minister in Prussia and uncle of Mme de Senfft. It was difficult to believe in the authenticity of the piece, so ill did it suit the presumed wisdom of a statesman occupied with the grand idea of restoring liberty to his country. *M. de Senfft was the more inclined to suspicion because the letter implied a confidential relation with Prince Wittgenstein, and that he knew M. de Stein's repugnance for the man, who was decried then by all parties alike.* Nevertheless the original was produced to Prince Wilhelm of Prussia and H. v. Brockhausen and its authenticity was acknowledged. It was known afterwards that the letter was written in an unguarded moment.

Another criticism upon Stein's conduct may perhaps occur to the reader. Was there any occasion, he may ask, to refer to such dangerous topics in this particular letter, even had Prince Wittgenstein been a more proper confidant than he seems to have been? It will be seen from the opening of the letter that Stein's principal business with the Prince was to induce the Elector of Hessen through him to invest some of his savings in Prussian Domain Lands; another letter which Stein calls 'official' dealt with this subject; but apparently for courtesy Stein thought it well to add a few friendly lines in a less stiff and serious manner. Now could he not think of less dangerous topics for such friendly chit-chat? Was it necessary to write conspiracy merely for his correspondent's amusement? But here Stein may be defended. If we compare the allusions in this letter with the insurrection which actually broke out in the Kingdom of Westphalia in the April following, we shall see that the allusions are not of the nature of chit-chat, but point at something very definite, and that Stein may have had a most serious object in inserting them in his letter. Stein's own

sister, an ardent patriot, was living in Westphalia, and Dörnberg, the future leader of the insurrection, was at this time in close communication with Scharnhorst and Gneisenau. But how did all this concern Wittgenstein? The answer is that through Wittgenstein Stein communicated with the Elector of Hessen. Now it is to be remembered that the Elector's dominions had been incorporated with the Kingdom of Westphalia. No one therefore had a closer interest in the imminent Westphalian insurrection than the very person whom Stein considered himself to be addressing through Wittgenstein; and since the question is of extorting from the miserly Elector some of his savings, no argument could be more apposite than that which these allusions convey, viz. that the Elector is only asked to subscribe money to his own restoration.

On the morning of September 21st, Stein received some intimation of what had happened from letters of his friends, and a little later arrived a certain Captain v. Thile with full information. Thile was at this time on the staff of Blücher, who was commanding in Pomerania; in later days and under Frederick William IV. he rose to be a Cabinet Minister, and died in 1852. He had been sent by Blücher on some business to Marshal Soult at Berlin. The Marshal had pointed to Stein's letter as it appeared not in the *Moniteur* but in the *Telegraph of Berlin*, an organ of the Opposition, and had exclaimed, 'The King is ruined by his Ministers.' Thile read the letter, hurried away, and took horse at once for Königsberg. When Stein understood his situation he walked up and down the room for

some minutes, then stopped suddenly before Thile, and said, 'Well! in Berlin I suppose they think I am hanged already!' Thile answered that he had not spoken to any one in Berlin, but had thought it better to come at once in person and report the matter to the Minister. 'You are right,' said Stein; 'the King must learn this from my mouth first.' He went out, and meeting Prince Radzivill at the door, put his hand on his shoulder and said, 'Another time, my dear Prince; now I must have an audience of the King.' He went at once and asked for his dismissal on the ground that his remaining in office would be detrimental both to the King and to the country. The King's reply was that he could not spare him for the present, that he must wait for the Czar's return, and that in the mean time Golz, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, must go instead of Stein to Erfurt.

Such then was the unfortunate occurrence which Napoleon took advantage of to force a new treaty upon Prussia, and in the end, though not at once, to exact the dismissal of Stein. It is curious to observe, and it ought to have put Stein on his guard, that he had dealt in precisely the same way with the Saxon Government the year before. There too a spirited Minister, Count v. Loss, had upheld the courage of the Elector against Napoleon. There too papers had been seized, at the house of Mr Wynn the English ambassador, in which proofs of Loss's English sympathies were found. Napoleon had instantly quoted these papers in an interview with a Saxon negotiator and accused the Elector of treachery. The Elector had allowed himself to be brow-beaten,

Loss had been ignominiously dismissed, and the subjection of Saxony was from that time complete. Not less eagerly did Napoleon seize his advantage now. On the very day on which the *Moniteur* printed Stein's letter—the 8th of September—and more than a fortnight before the *Moniteur* arrived in Königsberg, a new Convention was laid before Prince Wilhelm and Brockhausen, which they were required to sign on the instant under penalty of indefinite evils for Prussia. Stein's letter furnished the excuse which was wanting for imposing new conditions unknown to the Treaty of Tilsit.

I have seized letters (said Napoleon) which make me acquainted with the temper that prevails in Prussia. I will not suffer it. Be assured that I will be swift like lightning to suppress any outbreak of ill-will among you. I know from the letter of one of your Ministers the designs that are entertained, and that hopes are built on the Spanish occurrences. But it is an illusion: France has such an immense power that she can hold her own everywhere.

The Convention now proposed, instead of arranging for the evacuation of Prussia in fulfilment of the Treaty of Tilsit, reserved to Napoleon the three fortresses of Glogau, Stettin and Küstrin with 10,000 French troops, which were to be subsisted at the expense of Prussia, with the command of seven military roads between these fortresses and Magdeburg, Stralsund, Kalisch, and Danzig. The rest of the country was to be evacuated in return for a payment of 140,000,000 francs (instead of 112,000,000 as in the Convention of March), for an additional cession of territory in the neighbourhood of Magdeburg, and for the surrender of certain pecuniary claims which the

Prussian Government had on subjects of the Duchy of Warsaw, and finally (by a secret Article) was to reduce her army to 42,000 men, and not increase it again for ten years. It must be repeated that these new cessions were dictated to Prussia by no right but that of the stronger, just as if the Treaty of Tilsit had not existed or as if Prussia had since been worsted in a new war. Finally the power of imposing new conditions of the same kind upon Prussia whenever it should be convenient to Napoleon was formally reserved in the 4th Article, which provided that the claims which the provinces separated from the Prussian Monarchy might have on the Prussian Government should be the subject of a separate arrangement.

This Convention then, laid before them on the very day when Stein's letter appeared in the *Moniteur*, Prince Wilhelm and Baron Brockhausen, not being allowed a respite even while they should consult their Government, had no resource but to sign. After this it lay with the King to decide whether the evacuation of Prussia by the French troops should relieve the country of its incubus and enable it at last to raise its head again, or should bring with it no relief, but rather confirm the servitude of Prussia.

Stein's unfortunate and imprudent letter could not, after all, be considered as altering in any respect the relations of France and Prussia and ought not therefore to have been allowed by the King to have any effect upon the negotiations. As Stein himself observed in a letter to the Czar, dated September 21st, it was absurd to suppose that expressions

contained in the private letter of an official who could be dismissed in a moment gave France new claims on Prussia, or Prussia new means of paying France. After, as before, the seizure of the letter the question was simply this, What means of resisting has Prussia? and moreover the seizure of the letter did not perceptibly diminish those means. Napoleon gained by it a pretext, but nothing more. If no letter had been seized, he would equally have desired to impose the Convention on Prince Wilhelm, and he would equally have been able to do so. What influenced Prince Wilhelm was Napoleon's overwhelming power, not the pretext he alleged. Had the pretext been less strong, had Napoleon merely alleged vague suspicions of an intended rebellion, which he would have been able to do even if the letter had never been seized, and at the same time assumed the same alarming tone, the Prince must equally have yielded. It was for the King not to allow himself to be intimidated in this way, but to consider calmly what means Napoleon had of enforcing his exorbitant demands. No error had been detected in the calculation which his Ministers had laid before him, that Prussia had now scarcely anything to fear because she had scarcely anything to lose; that if she were actually annexed and the King himself driven into exile, her position would be scarcely worse and his perhaps more comfortable than before; but that Napoleon was certainly weaker than he had been, that he wanted his troops and was not in a position to take any extreme course with Prussia, and that the exorbitant demands he now made only cloaked

a consciousness of diminished power. That Napoleon now knew the chief Minister of Prussia to be planning a general insurrection of North Germany was no reason why the King should be alarmed, though it might well alarm Napoleon. Napoleon, we may be sure, knew well that the Spanish insurrection was the great disaster of his career, and that a German insurrection added would be as much as he could resist. Instead of disowning it and dismissing the Minister the King should have paraded the German insurrection, made the most of it, and redoubled his marks of confidence in Stein, for instead of being his weakness it was the best card he had to play. Perhaps Stein himself would not have been so rash at this crisis had he not felt that there was a kind of policy in letting Napoleon have a glimpse of the dangers his tyranny was preparing for him.

If so, Stein had forgotten that the ultimate decision did not rest with his own firm will, but with a will always fatally inclined to inaction and concession. Before he heard of the seizure of the letter he must have become aware of this, for since it was written he had had that interview with the King in which he had learned that everything was to be left to Russia, and he had also heard from the Czar that nothing could be done at present. In these circumstances we cannot wonder that he recommended the King to dismiss him. What he had overlooked was precisely what the enemy was in no danger of overlooking, for Napoleon's special talent lay in the happy audacity with which he dealt with weak people, in the

instinctive readiness with which, while his own views were clear and purposes fixed, he entered into the confused views, the vacillations and bewilderments of the feeble despots whom it was his mission to humble. A new crisis was come upon Prussia similar to those which we have remarked in the earlier periods of the European war. As in 1799, as in 1803, as in 1805, the Government was called on for an act of firm resolution; in the fortnight that followed the appearance of the *Moniteur* in Königsberg, it was to be decided whether the Government would take up a strong position or make a new disastrous concession; and unfortunately, though resolute counsellors were at hand this time, the ultimate decision lay with him who had found even Brunswick and Haugwitz too daring. But the present crisis proved more memorable in the history of Prussia than those which had preceded it. The interests at stake were this time so great, the public danger so manifest, and at the same time the unprecedented position of the Minister, who eclipsed the Sovereign as no minister had ever done before in Prussia, attracted public attention so strongly to the controversy, that the secrecy of Prussian government was broken through for the first time. Political passions were roused to a certain extent in a country to which they had hitherto been unknown. The French party of Berlin now, by the malice with which it pursued Stein, forced into existence an opposite party, and the great question so suddenly brought before the public mind by the publication of his letter, the question namely whether the example of Spain ought to be followed, could not

but be hotly debated. A patriotic party formed itself, to which as a matter of course Scharnhorst and Gneisenau belonged; to these were added others such as Schön, Sack, Sövern. There was something new in the constitution of these parties. They were not such as had been known in Prussia before, not such as cannot but arise in the most despotically governed State, for they were no longer exclusively composed of officials, and their controversies were no longer confined to the secrecy of the Council-board. They were the germs of parties of the English type, their rise marked the awakening of political consciousness, and their debates began to fill the columns of the newspapers. The followers of Stein began to show their enthusiasm in a way which, however natural, seemed new and unheard of to Prussian courtiers. Thus for instance writes Prince Wittgenstein himself:

Our credit in foreign countries declines from day to day, all confidence is lost; it seems to be intended to destroy both entirely. However insignificant may be the verses inserted in the Gazette of Königsberg and the remarks made on the subject by the Gazette of Berlin, they make nevertheless an incalculable impression abroad. It is inconceivable that the censor at Königsberg can allow articles like these to pass.

What were these 'verses inserted in the Königsberg Gazette'? The following poem is a specimen; it appeared on October 27th.

Stand fast, great man! a rock in stormy weather;
Let the wind howl, the whelming billow break,
Let the wild sea inisile thee—all together
Shall ne'er that ancient granite bruise or shake.

Rest still our guardian ! led by thee and shielded,
The true man feels not hope or courage fail ;
Against the house on this foundation builded,
No gates of dark destruction shall prevail.
How rich, how safe thy master, thee possessing,
A mine of worth and wisdom in one gem ;
Thee may he guard with care, a public blessing,
The costliest stone in all his diadem !

These verses, in which Stein is addressed as a political leader and the King is conjured not to dismiss him, are said to have been written by Süvern, the author of the conceit of 'Grundstein, Eckstein, Edelstein,' upon which these stanzas also are plainly grounded.

While the patriotic party vented their enthusiasm for their leader in the columns of the Königsberg Gazette, the discontented replied in the Berlin Vossische Zeitung by the pen of the Jew Lange. There Stein was accused of 'insulting the noblesse,' and of 'having adopted a system of levelling and anarchy.' There 'the great Napoleon' was extolled, and the tone in which the *Moniteur*, the *Journal de l'Empire*, and the other French organs discussed the newly revealed plans of the Prussian Minister, was echoed. As is usual with the incidents of Stein's life, all this seems far more important now than it could appear at the time. It was the peculiarity of his position that he could neither act nor suffer without commencing something new in the history of Prussia. The party quarrel which arose about his unfortunate letter is a landmark in that history as much as his Emancipating Edict. It marks the beginning of

political parties in Prussia. Since that time the strife of parties has never ceased, as indeed it cannot cease in any country in which political life has once begun; but before that time what strife there was in the political world was of an essentially different kind, for the contentions of Haugwitz and Hardenberg, Stein and Beyme, had been carried on in silence and secrecy, unregarded and almost unknown outside the official hierarchy.

If the rise of great popular parties is the best evidence of political life in a country, the year 1808 may be regarded as the political birth-year of a large part of the Continent. The parties both of Spain and of Prussia began in 1808, and they were called into existence by the same cause, viz. the pressure of Napoleon's tyranny. It is interesting to observe that the names of the great Continental parties date from the same year. Liberals and Conservatives were first arrayed in opposition to each other in the Spanish Junta of 1808, and these names are now heard in every European country. But the French party of Berlin and the following of Stein cannot be said to correspond, except very roughly, to the Conservatives and Liberals of modern Prussia, nor were the names introduced at this time. They did not come into general use till some years after the Peace, little earlier than the time when England, under the leadership of Canning, condescended to borrow this Continental nomenclature..

We return to the Convention. The King took the matter into his own hands and without consulting Stein sent, as early as September 29th, to

Count Golz at Erfurt, full powers to ratify it.
He afterwards wrote to Stein :

It will always be difficult or impossible to determine whether we did well or ill to ratify. I must however take this opportunity of remarking that I should never have determined on the step if your opinion had been distinctly opposed to it and supported by tenable reasons.

The King might no doubt consider Stein's reasons untenable, but in all the documents before us they are certainly given with sufficient definiteness. It appears that Count Golz threw his influence into the scale in favour of ratification, being intimidated by the language held at Berlin, when he passed through it on his way to Erfurt, by Daru, Davoust and the other Frenchmen, who made the most of Napoleon's anger and represented the absolute necessity of submitting to his will.

It seems impossible to justify this step except upon purely fatalistic principles. If it can be right for a government to abandon all calculation of consequences and to remain purely passive, committing everything to Providence, then the King may have been right; and it is true that in this instance Prussia did escape ruin and after six years, not so much of distress or humiliation as of suspended existence, actually recovered all that she had lost. Influenced by this result, some of those who at the time most eagerly recommended resistance, for example Boyen the eminent military reformer, afterwards retracted their opinion and declared that the King had been right. But what rational argument could be alleged at the time for the course

which he pursued? To save Prussia the only human means were either to resist Napoleon or to take measures for conciliating him. The King could not make up his mind to the first course, but neither did he adopt the second. His conduct was not such as might lead Napoleon to regard him with good will or to desire to treat him as a dependent ally rather than to destroy him. He had already at the end of August, following the advice of Stein, declined to become a member of the Confederation of the Rhine. Undoubtedly this refusal was honourable to him, undoubtedly it was not possible to conciliate Napoleon without the sacrifice of honour. But this being so the only rational alternative was resistance, and the King's course does not deserve to be called a policy and ought not to be considered to have had any, even temporary, good effects. That Prussia was not destroyed but continued to exist seems to have been the effect of no act of hers, but simply of want of power on the part of Napoleon, and it is evident that his power would have been still further diminished by her resistance. During every year that she remained passive she drew nearer and nearer to destruction, for she acquired no new securities and saw her enemy grow continually stronger and stronger. It was a policy of complete nullity, a policy which did not find courage even in despair, which refrained from using the advantages offered by fortune, prostrated itself before Napoleon when he intended nothing but destruction for Prussia as humbly as if there had been a hope of appeasing him, and was just as abject when he was in

embarrassment and difficulty as when he was at the height of success.

After September 29th, when the King took the decisive step, the controversy might have ceased, for no good could be done by continuing it. But the King's act remained for some time unknown to the public, and it is curious to observe that Stein himself, though in his dictatorial position he had a kind of oversight of Foreign Affairs, received no direct intimation of it and actually did not discover what had been done till October 11th, that is, nearly a fortnight after. Through the first half of October, therefore, the discussion went on as though the matter had still to be decided. An Appeal to the Germans, to be published when the war should begin, was sketched by Süvern and laid before the King, who found a pretext for putting it on one side; and we have a report of Stein's, dated October 12th, upon an essay by Gneisenau recommending war. Part of this report has been already quoted; it shows how completely unchanged Stein's opinion remained, though the ardour of his language is damped by the discovery he had made only the day before.

The following sentences are worth quoting:

If Your Majesty signs the Treaty with a view of keeping it, all the consequences will follow which H. v. Gneisenau describes—impoverishment of the nation, exasperation and contempt towards the Government, complete subservience to the destructive will of the French Emperor, whose diseased ambition and restlessness ruins the public and private well-being of all the nations he rules either directly or indirectly. These are not the reasonings of over-excited minds, but experiences which every man must make who has made acquaintance with the countries of the Confede-

ration of the Rhine and the reigning opinion about the princes of it.

But if Your Majesty signs the Treaty in order to break it upon occasion and particularly when a war with Austria breaks out, then you only use a stratagem against wickedness and violence. Shall the Emperor Napoleon alone have a privilege of putting evil in place of right and lies in place of truth?

On these grounds I repeat my counsel that we make approaches to Austria and prepare all physical and moral means within the country in order to break the French yoke when war breaks out; and I repeat my request that according to the decision adopted the adherents of the one or the other opinion, opposite to the adopted decision, may be dismissed.

In utterances like these, it is surely astonishing that the King should detect, of all things, a want of distinctness!

Another document of great interest is a memorial addressed to Stein, under date October 14th, and signed by Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Nicolovius, Süvern, Schön, Grolmann, and Röckner. It begins by asserting as a notorious fact, what Stein also uniformly maintained, that the Treaty, ratified or not, cannot possibly be fulfilled by Prussia. Then follows a forcible paragraph.

But granting that the Treaty could be fulfilled, and the mitigation contemplated were obtained, who does not see that even the most advantageous arrangement would be nothing more than an agreement of humiliating servitude for a time and annihilation after that? Cannot we give him who has all along been our enemy, credit for prudence enough to follow the Macchiavellian rule, when an enemy is once humbled not to leave him half disabled? Is it not evident that he is compelled to act as he does by his own embarrassing position, and that our State would not now exist if circumstances had favoured him more? And like a patient victim we are to let him lead us off for a more convenient season!

They contemplate the case which actually happened, viz. that Prussia should be saved by mere good luck; but they say,

May some good genius keep the thought far from every Prussian heart! Not to speak of its profound meanness, how are we to count on what is so uncertain? who is to guarantee that events will follow the desired course, that they will not take another turn and leave us in a labyrinth from which rescue is no longer to be hoped?

They recognise the approach of the Anti-Napoleonic Revolution.

Europe has declared itself in a state of revolution. The fire must blaze out, first here, then there, one flame must kindle another till the universal conflagration has consumed the enemy of peace, and till then there can be no rest!

They point out that when the French are gone, the misery of the country will be attributed to the King, and he will inherit their odium; then they continue thus:

But perhaps it is intended to ratify the Treaty in order to break it again a few days or weeks after. Pray Heaven it be not so! Let us have done at last, taught by our sad experience, with the pitiful policy of weaklings who deal in stratagem that should be secret and is as visible as the day. Only frank great-hearted dealing can cope with our enemy's subtler craft. Spain shows what may come of this: no good has ever come of the opposite course.

Their conclusion is as follows:—

It is therefore the unanimous wish of the undersigned passionate lovers of King and country, that the Convention be not ratified, and that your Excellency, understanding better than we can express them all the reasons against the ratification, use all the emphasis peculiar to you to prevent it. We believe the enemy is precluded by his position from attempting any violent course, and

if he did that too would not be without its advantages ; in any case we hold that there is a way of deferring the ratification which the enemy cannot oppose without harm to himself, since it binds at the same time the people to the King's interest—that is, to ask the people about it in their assembled representatives. So will time be gained to await the most favourable moment, and assuredly any day may bring us that.

In this passage is seen the close connexion of the Anti-Napoleonic Revolution with Liberalism in the Continental sense of that word. It is from the necessity of calling in the people against Napoleon, from the proved dependence of the sovereigns upon the people in their extreme need, that the rights of the people on the Continent have been deduced in the present century.

For the present however, all schemes of the kind were frustrated by the King's decision. Several days before the date of this memorial the ratifications had been exchanged at Erfurt. Count Golz had had his interview with Napoleon on October 9th, and wrote that the Emperor was still much incensed with Stein and that the only chance of rescuing Prussia from destruction lay for the future in complete dependence on France. As before at Tilsit, nothing was vouchsafed to Prussia except under the name of a compliment to the Czar. By his intercession she obtained a remission of 20,000,000 francs. Thus by the vague terror attached to his name, and by a skilful use of threats, Napoleon had succeeded in making as good terms with Prussia as if he had been still at the height of his power, as if no Spanish insurrection had taken place, and as if no necessity compelled him to withdraw his army of occupation. At the same time the plans of the

patriots for a great German insurrection to take place in 1809 were frustrated by this new submission on the part of the very Government which would naturally take the lead in such an insurrection and by the publicity with which it had repudiated the views of Stein.

The conclusion of the Treaty carried with it another necessary consequence which is not less interesting to us here, namely the fall of the Minister. How far Napoleon's anger would go was as yet uncertain, and there was a disposition to imagine it rather simulated than real. But in fact he could hardly allow Stein to remain Minister after the revelations of the *Moniteur* without giving a dangerous encouragement to the spirit of resistance. And much less than Napoleon's avowed hostility was required to overthrow Stein. We have before observed how precarious his power was at the best, since he was odious to the aristocratic party and not specially agreeable to the King. We have seen that nothing supported him but the sense that an able Minister was indispensable. Had the King now determined upon an energetic policy, Stein would have become more necessary than ever in spite of his letter, and in all probability a chapter in his life would have opened far more eventful and brilliant than that which was drawing to a close. But on the other hand, as the King decided the other way, it seems likely that Stein would have had to retire even if the letter had never been written and Napoleon never been provoked. For with the new Treaty and the withdrawal of the army of occupation Prussia's condition was altered and became, not indeed

really less desperate and humiliating, but more settled and such as did not seem to call so imperatively for a dictator. The public alarm subsided somewhat, heroic remedies became one degree less popular, and those who desired nothing better than a peaceful course of vegetation began to look about them again. Such a new period did not suit a reforming spirit, nor indeed a high spirit at all, in the Minister. When the only chance of Prussia seemed to lie in an unreserved devotion to France, the most suitable Minister would be one of those courtiers who might be trusted never to question Napoleon's will, and who at the same time might procure to the King and Queen as comfortable a life as possible. Stein's ministerial career was felt to be over, though another month passed before the King accepted his resignation.

But the reader must not suppose that because we have brought him within sight of the end of Stein's Ministry we have nearly completed our view of his performance as a Minister. On the contrary, the greater part of this remains to be described. During the months in which first the negotiation with France and, when that seemed hopeless, the conspiracy against France, were going forward, Stein was carrying on at the same time those legislative labours which were to make him memorable after all his efforts to pacify or to resist Napoleon had proved fruitless. Before we describe the circumstances of his resignation, and, what speedily followed, his proscription by Napoleon, we must retrace our steps and examine his reforming legislation.

Meanwhile I may insert in this place, as a new illustration of the unpopularity of Stein's measures

among old-fashioned Prussians, which may be compared with the critique above given from Marwitz, the following estimate by the celebrated Yorck, the typical Prussian soldier of that age.

The man, unfortunately for us, has been in England and brought thence his statesmanship, and so now the institutions, which have taken ages to mature, of the rich, maritime, commercial, and manufacturing Great Britain are to be adapted to our poor agricultural Prussia.

What a hurry he was in to come out with his views! The moment he reached Memel, came the extorted Edict, allowing every one without distinction to buy a knightly estate and on the other hand the nobility to practise any civil trade. A regular abolition, or one would prefer to say, humiliation of the noblesse is altogether repugnant to the spirit of our Monarch and our people. Will the grocer or tailor who buys the estate, or the speculator who is thinking of his profit and is already meditating a new sale, will he too stand by his monarch in misfortune with land and life? Will the new lord keep his peasantry faithful along with himself, though they received him no doubt at the gate with the most sheepish bleating, as the old landowner did, who ruled in his village over hearts with love and loyalty? As to the so-called slavery of the peasantry, we all know that that is mere philanthropic twaddle.

In the end it comes to this, that a landed property is to become like a dollar in money, multiplying itself by circulation, so as to furnish something to the state by stamp duties. No paternal idea after the King's heart! This sort of thing could only be hatched in a banker's office or by a Professor who teaches in the lecture-room an ill-digested Adam Smith. Unfortunately this kind of trash has taken possession of the great genius our Minister. Indeed it is evident how it comes in from all sides like a flood and what they begin to propose in their clique. We have already heard the democratic absurdity of appointing to all public offices by a popular vote.

But how is the fair land laid waste with this huckstering system! Even the royal domains, which they want to alienate and put the King upon a salary, are not spared. The speculator who acquires an estate thinks only of the present; he will hasten

to fell the beautiful oak and beech woods because they do not bring in so much profit as wheat-fields. But years hence the wind will blow the distant sand-hills over the wheat fields, and instead of rich green woods rejoicing eye and heart, we shall look on dry buckwheat, most meagre of corn-crops. Those old trees of our country will become foreigners and make way for birches and American poplars, which grow faster: the fir woods they will allow to pass, since we cannot do without building-timber and fuel, and the wood-stealers too cannot be allowed to starve.

Another hobby that the Minister rides is the population. Out of the family of every respectable citizen and master artisan who employs a number of apprentices whom he supports and keeps under moral discipline, a number of small families is to issue, every prentice marrying his lass and founding a new family of starvation. In like manner in the country, where they want to dissolve all the great estates into small ones, and dividing every inheritance, form a number of small garden plots or at least cottier holdings for every well-to-do noble owner or peasant on the great scale. If only the fine large villages could dwindle into such little holdings and the free countryman run a hedge round his acre or two and shoot his game within that area, the ideal they aim at would be realised. They are quite right in their calculation of the progressive growth of population, but is not such multiplication of beggary—why, we ought to be thankful that we have not that kind of thing like France and England!—is not it like the vermin that is bred out of wood-shavings?

Then this violent abolition of all menial services of the peasants without any compensation to the land-owner. How that will set the Estates quarrelling, and what an advantage it will give the enemy! To carry it out literally however is impossible. Without modification it would be a real infringement of property. Frederick William III. is assuredly not disposed to take the *sum cuique*, fundamental principle of all Prussian Kings, out of the star of his order and put St Crispin in the place of it.

The Minister's object is well enough understood. He wants to show the peasant an Eldorado in the distance. To enjoy it, all that is necessary is to drive the French out of the country. It is of a piece with his secret associations in Germany which Napoleon has already got wind of, and which indeed we should not blame him for if only at the present moment he did not compromise the

King with them. But to a Prussian Minister of State the King's person and the safety of his house ought to take precedence of everything; besides, he mistakes the character of the Prussian peasant if he thinks he would do anything without his King's command and without great battalions that prove the matter to be serious; then he falls into his place and will hit out, no doubt, even at those who are quartered upon him: still the French have Argus eyes. For a Sicilian Vesper or war in the Vendée fashion the German is not at all suited. Besides in our flat land how could anything of the kind be possible? In our present circumstances the wisest and safest course is quietly to watch the course of political relations, and it is real folly to provoke the enemy at our own risk.

Such talk was heard at the Perponcher Club of Königsberg, where the Prussian Fronde met and Yorck was listened to as an oracle.

PART V.

MINISTRY OF STEIN.—CONCLUSION.

And here I do desire those into whose hands this work shall fall, that they do take in good part my long insisting upon the laws that were made in this King's reign ; whereof I have these reasons : both because it was the pre-eminent virtue and merit of this King...but chiefly because in my judgment it is some defect even in the best writers of history, that they do not often enough summarily deliver and set down the most memorable laws that passed in the times whereof they write, being indeed the principal acts of peace. For though they may be had in original books of law themselves, yet that informeth not the judgment of kings and counsellors and persons of estate so well as to see them described and entered in the table and portrait of the times.—BACON, *History of King Henry VII.*



CHAPTER I.

LEGISLATIVE REFORM.



It is impossible not to see that the legislation begun by Stein and afterwards continued by Hardenberg was similar in its durable results to the work of the French Revolution. It accomplished changes of the same kind and comparable in extent, though by a perfectly regular process. We may imagine that if, when Turgot was Comptroller General, the privileged classes of France had been too much terrified by the effect of some disaster to resist his innovations, or the King had stood by him as Louis XIII. stood by Richelieu, the transformation in France would actually have taken the same course; what is now called the French Revolution would have appeared simply as the Ordonnances of Turgot, and in place of the Napoleonic period Europe would have seen only a great revival of French influence in the happy later years of Louis XVI. and in the glorious reign of Louis XVII.

Thus the Emancipating Edict answers to the Fourth of August, and the Administrative Reform to that part of the Constitution of 1791 which proved durable, while the Military Reform was avowedly suggested by the organisation of the armies of the

Revolution. If Prussia did not at this time go so far as France had done, in creating parliamentary institutions, the French attempt ended in failure and practical absolutism was restored in France under Napoleon. In their Code the French followed the example set by Frederick. To the revolutionary law of inheritance the Stein-Hardenberg movement produced nothing similar; on the other hand France produced nothing similar to the Town Ordinance of Stein.

This general resemblance implies that the old regime in Prussia was in the main like that of France, that the country suffered from evils and abuses of the same kind. Nevertheless there are differences to be noted as well as resemblances, and perhaps there is no easier way of getting a general view of Stein's work than to compare it with the parallel transformation in France, which has been so much more studied and is so much more generally understood. In particular points the comparison has already been instituted as occasion arose; but it will be convenient in this place to draw it out more deliberately.

In both countries then the King was absolute, and so far there was resemblance. But what was monstrous and immoral in the absolutism of France was not to be seen in Prussia. In France it was the accepted maxim, even after the accession of Louis XVI., that the country belonged to the King as a landowner's estate belongs to him¹. The 'enormous creed of many made for one' was still

¹ See the passages cited by Taine, *Origines de la France Contemporaine*, Vol. I. p. 102.

openly preached there, and thus every year heaped fresh fuel on that furnace of revolutionary frenzy which burns wherever such doctrines are received. But in Prussia the so-called rights of man were theoretically acknowledged, and by none more fully than by the despot himself. In the Code of Frederick, commenced in 1746 and after long suspension recommenced in 1780 and published in 1791, it was laid down that

The good of the State and of its inhabitants in particular (*insbesondere*) is the end of the civil association and the universal object of the laws. The Head of the State, on whom falls the obligation of furthering the public weal, is entitled to guide and determine the external actions of all the inhabitants in conformity with this object. The laws and ordinances of the State may not limit the natural liberty and rights of the citizen any further than the above-mentioned object requires.

It is expressly stated that it is in order to perform his duties to the public that certain revenues are assigned to the Prince, and that the domains belong to the State, though the administration of them rests with him. So much for theory; in practice, as we have repeatedly observed, the difference between French and Prussian absolutism was equally striking. Even Frederick William II., though wasteful and vicious, can hardly be classed with thoroughly bad kings, whereas both Louis XIV. and Louis XV. had systematically sacrificed the public interests to their own. If it were allowed that absolutism is in certain cases a necessary form of government, it could not be denied at the same time that the Hohenzollerns had on the whole performed the duties which absolute sovereigns owe to their subjects in an exemplary manner.

In both countries again there were privileged classes, and in both countries the Revolution was in a great degree directed against their privileges. But in this point also the difference was remarkable. In France the noblesse, though left in the enjoyment of their privileges, were carefully excluded from all real share in the government. The complaint against them was, not that they had too much power, but that they had privileges without power. It was as sinecurists that they were attacked, not as doing too much, but as doing nothing while they enjoyed and consumed so much. Sieyes in his *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers Etat?* insists particularly upon the uselessness and isolation of the noblesse. 'It is impossible to say what place a privileged corporation should take in the social order. It is like asking what place in the body of an invalid ought to be assigned to the malignant humour which weakens and racks him.' Nothing similar could be said of the Prussian noblesse. They were not a class cynically devoted to enjoyment at the expense of the public, nor were they excluded from a share in the government. On the contrary the army was officered by them almost exclusively, and the principal posts in the civil service were also confined to them. Whereas in France the bureaucracy governed while the aristocracy lived in idleness, in Prussia bureaucracy and aristocracy were in the main identified. And if in both countries the spirit of reform attacked the noblesse, it was not for the same reason in Prussia as in France. In France they were attacked for not governing, for doing nothing; in Prussia for not governing successfully, for having had all the power

of the State and particularly of the army in their hands and having brought the State to ruin and the army to ignominious defeat.

Again there was a bureaucracy in Prussia as well as in France, but it is of much importance to distinguish accurately in what sense. Official government is often opposed to aristocratic government; in the language of old Marquis Mirabeau the natural enemy of the great races is '*l'animal armé d'une plume*'. Nevertheless it is possible, as was shown in Prussia, to form a bureaucracy out of an aristocracy; the animal armed with a pen may be himself a scion of some great race. The administration of Prussia, though aristocratic, formed a bureaucracy because it formed a separate profession with an exclusive professional feeling, and because it was responsible to no opinion outside itself, scarcely even to the judgment of the King. It was liable to all those faults of torpid routine and inveterate incorrigible corruption which mark bureaucracies everywhere. The lethargy, mediocrity and corruption of officials are a standing topic of Cabinet Orders during the earlier part of the reign of Frederick William III., and it was confessed by the best-informed Ministers that the evil could be checked by no authority. Stein's predecessor Struensee had been reduced to a sort of inertness by his sense of the invincible nature of this corruption. When in 1797 a certain Held published a furious attack upon two leading Ministers for their proceedings in the newly annexed Polish provinces and was in consequence condemned to eighteen months imprisonment, Struensee, who was his friend, re-

minded him of what had befallen his own brother in Denmark, and added :

The supreme Power is much less strong than is commonly supposed, it is afraid to expose or punish the delinquencies of those whom it clothes with its authority, because it fears by so doing to weaken the feeling of respect for Government in general. From its position it can take no notice of the worst acts of its officials so long as forms are observed, and it must punish as a crime the most righteous act of a virtuous man if it offends against forms.

And on the same occasion Count Schulenburg asked Held,

How could you attempt such a thing, or hope to accomplish what is quite beyond *me*? All that depends on personal relations that you know nothing of. Private attempts to expose public frauds cannot succeed if only the Government makes up its mind to take no notice of them.

The King himself said to Massenbach in 1801 in reference to a book on military reform which Massenbach had laid before him, that he had found some of the ideas excellent and well worthy to be adopted. 'But,' he added, 'you would not believe what hindrances are put in my way when I wish to make any alteration.' That unintelligent ponderous obstinacy, that somnambulism, which marks the action of great corporations, and which when it seizes upon a government marks that Government also has become a corporation, and is called the bureaucratic spirit, is evidently pointed at in observations like these.

The old regime in France, it has been repeated to satiety since De Tocqueville's time, was of the same bureaucratic kind. 'I could not have believed what I saw when I was Comptroller General,' said

Law, 'the government of France is in the hands of some thirty intendants.'

Thus there was resemblance between the two countries in that which is the essential character of a bureaucratic government. That is, in both countries officials acted not in accordance with fixed and known laws but in accordance with *instructions* received from superiors. Nevertheless there was a considerable difference in the spirit of the two bureaucracies. That of Prussia was much less arbitrary than that of France. It was guided by a fixed administrative tradition which had been even in part reduced to writing, while in France 'the administration habitually meets the difficulty of the moment by exceptional rules, which sometimes abridge sometimes enlarge existing rights, which take them away, then give them back, then take them away again.' Moreover the administrative tradition in Prussia was not purely despotic but partly shaped by the local boards who were subject to it; it adapted itself in some degree to the peculiarities and established customs of particular provinces.

It is well known that in France this bureaucratic form of government was not regarded as among the abuses of the time. So far from assailing the system the Revolution adopted and developed it with such energy that for a long time it was the custom to speak of the administrative centralisation of France as an achievement and among the most glorious achievements of the Revolution. Something similar now happened in Prussia. We have observed all along that the plan which lay nearest to

Stein's heart was such a reform of the administrative hierarchy as could not fail to increase its power and therefore to strengthen the yoke of centralisation in the country. This was pardonable because a strong Government was wanted for immediate needs, and because the administration in Prussia, if in a sense omnipotent, was at the same time extremely inefficient. One reason of this was the confusion which Frederick the Great had caused by his over-busy and arbitrary energy. Another was the unconsolidated character of the Monarchy, composed as it was of provinces locally divided and differing widely from each other in their condition and in the length of time that they had belonged to the Monarchy, some being Slavonic, some Teutonic, and again some belonging to the ancient possessions of the Hohenzollern family, and others recently added to the Monarchy by Frederick the Great. The confusion they caused in the administration was such as to call imperatively for reform if catastrophes like that of 1806 were to be avoided for the future ; and accordingly Stein reformed and strengthened the Prussian bureaucracy. But he was not insensible, as the French were, to the faults of bureaucratic government. On the contrary he was keenly alive to them, and in consequence the Stein legislation includes one great reform which has no parallel in the French Revolution. While with the one hand Stein strengthens bureaucracy, with the other he lays the foundation of that system which is the enemy of bureaucracy, viz. self-government. He did this by his Municipal Reform (Städteordnung).

What has been said above of the moral supe-

riority of the royal Government in Prussia carries with it by implication another important difference between the two countries. The worst point about the old regime of France was its finance; more directly than anything else this was the cause of its ruin. Fifty-six violations of the public faith since the reign of Henri IV. and upwards of a milliard and a half borrowed in ten years under Louis XVI. drove Necker to summon the States General as the only way of giving the Government credit enough to enable it to go on borrowing. There was nothing similar to this in Prussia. When we call Frederick William II. wasteful we are comparing him with the other Hohenzollerns; in a French King his expenditure would have been moderate. Prussian finance was as respectable as that of any Government could be, and had not the country been so poor and the army so large there would never have been any difficulty on this head. But yet, as we have seen, Stein's legislation was caused no less than the French Revolution by financial distress. The disasters of the war and Napoleon's exactions caused the same distress in Prussia that had been created in France by the demoralisation of Government. The difference was that the royal bankrupt in Prussia got his certificate without difficulty. There was no stain on the character of Government, and consequently little bitterness poisoned the Revolution that followed.

Religiously, Prussia had what in such a crisis was the incalculable advantage of being a Protestant country. This means that she was self-contained, and could adopt whatever measures seemed right to herself without asking the consent of any extra-

neous power. She had no *prêtres insermentés* such as those who had so large a share in giving to the French movement the unfortunate turn it took.

Socially, in the relation of classes, the distribution of property, the condition of the lower orders, Prussia differed from France in all the results of the military system of the Hohenzollerns. This system, while it saved the noblesse from falling into a frivolity fatal to their privileges by giving them an important function, protected the peasantry not indeed from hardship but from neglect. The peasantry was the army, and therefore, though it had much to suffer, yet the military necessities of the State had compelled the Government to show a constant solicitude for its welfare. In the end, as in France, the peasantry of Prussia became proprietors, but not in the same way. In France, by some almost inexplicable thrift, and partly through their masters' perpetual need of money, they contrived at the very time that they were pressed to the ground by unjust taxation to get possession of a large part of the soil of France; in Prussia they were put in possession of it by direct legislation, in this case principally the legislation of Hardenberg.

The resemblance between the Stein-Hardenberg movement and the French Revolution is confined to their results. In the manner of the two movements there was the greatest possible difference. The changes in Prussia were so quietly made and have had so little fame that this book is actually the first which it has been seriously attempted to give a ~~and~~ connected explanation of them to other
1. The French changes were made amidst

incredible tumult and excitement, so that the innovations themselves have always seemed far less important than the revolution in opinion and feeling that accompanied them. A whole nation threw itself into political speculation and, as might be expected from its inexperience, misapprehended the subject so as to produce a spurious system of *meta-politics*, but at the same time to give the greatest stimulus to political thought in all nations. No intellectual excitement in any degree similar seems to have either accompanied or followed the Reforms of Prussia. After the Peace of 1815 such an excitement does indeed arise in Germany and leads to precisely the same aberrations, but it is caused not by the Prussian Reforms but by the War of Liberation, and is less active in Prussia than in the countries of the Confederation of the Rhine.

This difference is perhaps partly to be explained by those differences between the condition of France and Prussia which I have noted. The old regime of France falling in time of peace under the weight of enormous abuses and injustices was a spectacle which could not but open every question in political science at once. In the condition of Prussia there was nothing that was so cryingly unjust or wrong. Her downfall was easily explicable and opened no new question. It was all explained by Jena, and the problem which it presented was only the old one which had occupied Frederick William and Frederick the Great, how to defend a very poor country that wanted a frontier.

In consequence of the tranquil manner in which the transformation was made in Prussia, those

results which in France can only be ascertained by a comparison between the state of society after the conclusion of the revolutionary movement and that of the old regime, are perceived here simply by referring to the Edicts and Cabinet Orders of Stein's Ministry. The work appears at first sight as threefold, consisting first of the great social statute which has been examined above, secondly, of the reform of the administration, and thirdly, of the introduction of self-government into towns. But under these three heads many minor reforms, also accomplished by Stein, come to be classed. In enumerating them, we are at once reminded of the double character that was before noticed in the Emancipating Edict, for we come upon two distinct series of reforms which may equally be regarded as supplementary to that Edict. The first series deals with the emancipation of the peasantry, the second with the liberation of trade.

(1) Not to exhaust too soon the reader's curiosity, I confined myself above to a translation of the Emancipating Edict and an attempt to state precisely what it accomplished. Now that we are brought back to the subject, the condition of the peasantry in Prussia at that time must be noted more particularly than has hitherto been found necessary.

Feudalism then still reigned in a much more literal sense than that in which we sometimes describe it as still surviving in England. With us the custom of primogeniture and the jurisdiction given to landowners in county government, make a system which may be called feudal as compared

with the French system, but it is a faint shadow of the feudalism of the old regime in Prussia. In order to picture that to ourselves, we must begin by observing that under it the country was divided not into ordinary English estates but into *manors*, with all that manorial organisation which has become rare in England, with copyholders, commons and manorial courts. But further, we must imagine the manorial organisation to be of a much more primitive type than it has been among us for many centuries. Beside payments in money, the peasants paid to their lords dues in kind and, where they were serfs, personal service. Their condition varied within very wide limits according as they were exempt from personal service or as the personal service and dues owed by them were definite or indefinite. But all alike were subject to the great law of caste, which fixed their position both for evil and for good, forbidding them to improve their *status* and securing them against loss of their land.

The Emancipating Edict had by no means abolished this state of things. It had neither converted the peasantry into labourers or farmers of the English sort, nor into proprietors as in France. The peasant neither ceased to pay dues and services to the lord, nor did the lord acquire the right, except in certain circumstances, of converting to some other use the land occupied by the peasant. But the Edict abolished in the first place the *status* of the peasant, and turned his occupation into a mere voluntary way of making a livelihood. Secondly it abolished what we call serfdom, or *Gutsuntertänigkeit*, after a certain date. This innovation,

though it strikes the imagination most, is not the easiest to understand. In what precisely does this Erbsunterthänigkeit (also called Eigenbehörigkeit, Gutspflichtigkeit, Leibeigenschaft, for there seems no definite difference in the meaning of these words) consist? The matter would be simple if services were commuted by it into money payments, but services continued to be rendered as before. The Edict says that all obligations incurred by free persons in virtue of the possession of a piece of land or of a particular contract are binding as before. If this means that there must be a contract but that every contract is binding, what does it enact which was not already enacted in the earlier articles of the Edict which relate to free choice of vocation? It seems however that a particular kind of personal service is understood to be forbidden by the abolition of serfdom. Thus Stein himself describes it when he says :

By an Edict of October 1807 it was enacted that from October 8th, 180⁸~~9~~, personal servitude with its consequences, in particular the very oppressive compulsory menial service, should be abolished.

The innovation made by this Edict seems to us now a mere step in the transition by which the Prussian peasant became a proprietor. In 1811, when Hardenberg was Minister, a new Edict was issued entitled an Edict for the Regulation of the Relations between Landlord and Tenant, by which the peasant became absolute proprietor of his holding, the lord being indemnified for the loss of his dues, services, dead stock, easements &c., by re-

ceiving a proportion of the peasant's land (one third in the case of hereditary holdings, one half in the case of holdings for life or for a term of years or at will) and by being freed from certain obligations such as the obligation to assist the tenant in case of misfortune. Thus was founded the peasant proprietorship of modern Prussia. It would appear that Stein when he signed the Emancipating Edict had no notion that this would be the end of the movement he commenced. He disapproved Hardenberg's measure as 'disturbing in a mischievous manner the family relations of the peasantry.' Perhaps we are to suppose that he contemplated assimilating the agrarian organisation of Prussia rather to the English than to the French model, and wished rather to purify the relation between the noble and the peasant class than to bring it to an end. But we are now to observe that he took other measures with respect to the peasantry which may be thought to have paved the way to Hardenberg's great innovation.

Beside the manor there is another institution, slightly known to us in England, which we are to think of as very important in Prussia. The Forest of Dean and Dartmoor are managed on different principles from ordinary estates, because they belong the one to the Crown, the other to the appanage of the Prince of Wales. This would be a most important fact if those estates covered half England. Such was the case with the domain lands of Prussia. In the immense estate of which the King was landlord, it was at any rate impossible to realise the English ideal. There no close personal

relation could subsist between the peasant and his lord, and the peasant's claim to the lord's assistance in distress must have worn an unfair appearance when the assistance came from the Government and was partly drawn from the public taxes. Accordingly we find, as had been the case in France in Necker's time, that a special course of legislation is applied to the domain lands, sometimes anticipating, sometimes diverging from the agrarian legislation applied to the whole country.

The Emancipating Edict says, (§ 12)

There shall be none but freemen in our dominions, as is already the case in our domains in all our provinces.

Very strangely, this statement seems to be incorrect. In the domains of the Kingdom of Prussia (strictly so called) serfdom had been abolished by Frederick William I., but not in those of the King's other states. Accordingly on October 28th, 1807, that is nearly three weeks after the Emancipating Edict, appeared a Cabinet Order abolishing it on the other domains, and mentioning particularly as abolished menial service and the payment of a fine on quitting a peasant's holding (*Loskaufsgeld*). This Order, though appearing later than the Emancipating Edict, was to take effect sooner, viz. from June 1st, 1808.

But a new question now arose. It is to be remembered that the distress created by the war was the immediate cause of the anxiety of the Government to ameliorate the condition of the peasantry. Now this distress was greatest in those Prussian provinces where the abolition of serfdom

only the equivalent which the State was to exact. Stein's decision is given in a report dated Königsberg, June 14th, 1808.

He begins by stating that the class of peasants whose interests are concerned may be estimated at not less than 47,000 families. He then describes in a summary manner the different schemes, and observes that the points at issue are (1) whether the grant is or is not to be accompanied with burdensome conditions, (2) whether the legal rights of the immediate peasantry are to be respected, (3) whether beside the primary object of the proposal other objects are to be kept in view, in particular the breaking up of commonalties and the supplanting of the poorer class of peasantry by cultivators possessing more capital.

It is here to be noticed that another feature of the Prussian land-system which the English reader does not readily apprehend, because it was almost erased from our own system by the great enclosure movement of the sixteenth century, is this, that peasant holdings were not isolated but universally united in commonalties. The economical school among Prussian officials were naturally almost as eager to rid the cultivator of the yoke of these commonalties as of the feudal oppression of his lord. The report of Broskovius drew out a scheme for dissolving these commonalties in the same act by which the peasantry should receive property in their holdings. It appears to be to such schemes that Wloemer in his memorial had referred when he described the peasantry as frightened by the magnitude of the innovation. Stein, following

the Minister v. Schrötter, pronounces against this scheme as attempting too much and deferring the benefits to be obtained from the reform to too late a time. In his comments on the scheme of the Immediate Commission, of which it will be remembered that Schön was a member, we see just such a controversy as Niebuhr had dreaded when the Emancipating Edict was under discussion. The Immediate Commission had proposed that all assistance to the peasants should cease at once, and that all those peasants who could not restore their holdings without such assistance and pay their dues on the legal date should be evicted. In this way a richer class of peasants would be created, and to these the property in the holdings might be granted in return for a money payment. The peculiarity of this scheme is that it would cause what was intended as a measure of relief to wear all the appearance of a new affliction. Stein remarks upon it that in the general impoverishment it would lead to the eviction of a large number, and moreover that the place of the evicted would probably not be filled up. But he observes also that it treats the peasant as if he had no legal rights, whereas he has a right to the *status* he has inherited, and accordingly 'it is unjust without any compensation to expel him from his holding, if he refuses to pay the money exacted for the concession and to renounce the subventions, and if he fails to pay his dues by the day.'

There remains the scheme of Minister v. Schrötter. By this the Government, in return for its concession, would cease to pay subventions and would resume a number of privileges hitherto enjoyed

by the Immediate Peasantry, such as the right of grazing cattle in the royal forests. He estimated that the gain to the treasury thus obtained would amount to 100,000 thalers annually. The services and payments in kind due from the peasants were to be commuted into money and added to the rent. Of the total, a fourth part was to remain as land-tax and the rest to be redeemable in thirty years. If any peasant should decline this arrangement, his holding was to be sold publicly and the price given him as compensation.

Stein accepts this scheme in outline, quoting historical authorities to show that a right of property had belonged to the peasant in the Middle Ages. He adds: Government measures by which in the present exhausted condition of the rural population a great part is expelled are unjust; they disturb cultivation, since they increase the burdens of the cultivator who remains, and leave without owner a great part of the property of those who leave. It is no doubt desirable that cultivation should be in the hands of well-to-do possessors, but this is to be sought from the advance of well-being and the free use of property introduced by the Edict of the 9th October and not from any sweeping measure.

But he modifies Schrötter's proposal by continuing the Government subventions for two years, that is for 1809 and 1810, as an act of royal grace, and in order to give the peasants time to repair their holdings.

Upon this report a law was draughted by Schrötter, and after receiving the criticism of Stägemann and of Stein himself was revised and

presented again on July 23rd. It received the royal assent and became law on July 27th; a law which, in the opinion of Stägemann, was

one of the most cheering signs of the times for the agriculture of our provinces, the dawn of a golden day upon economical darkness, and a new creation rising out of the ruins of the destructive war: never had any public measure been taken which had more happily or more beneficially united the private happiness of many families with the interest of the State.

(2) So far was carried in Stein's time the work of redemption of the peasantry commenced by the Emancipating Edict; meanwhile the liberation of trade which began with the same statute advanced steadily throughout the year 1808.

It is to be observed that this reform, like the other, had to commence at a point which with us was left behind so long ago that we have a difficulty in realizing it. The impediments to industry which we have in view when we speak of free trade are all of an indirect kind. They consist in duties levied by the State with the professed object of obtaining revenue; even when they are in effect prohibitive they are not so nominally. A direct interference of the law to prohibit any industry not in itself noxious is so unknown to us that we scarcely conceive the possibility of such a thing. Now the Emancipating Edict was the greatest measure of free trade, although it removed no duties, because it abolished not indirect impediments to industry but direct imperious prohibitions of it. But when these prohibitions were repealed, when caste was abolished in Prussia and permission was given to every Prussian citizen to pursue any occupation he

might choose, it is evident that the battle of free trade was far enough from being won, and that it was but barely commenced, since it remained to sweep away all the indirect impediments placed in the way of industry by the laws. These were not likely to be found few or trifling in a country where the system of government tutelage had reigned so long undisputed and where Frederick the Great had so recently incurred Mirabeau's criticism by the blind tenacity with which he had clung to the Mercantile System. In this instance also Stein could do no more than show the way to Hardenberg, whose legislation of October and November 1810 and of September 1811, first dealt comprehensively with the whole subject. But the following commencements of reform were made by Stein.

(a) Abolition of the Royalty on Millstones (Mühlsteinregal). Both the manufacture and the sale of millstones had been for a long time a government monopoly. The strictness of this restraint had been modified in 1802. It was now (January 23, 1808) abolished, again on the proposal of Schrötter, for the two Prussian Provinces. The abolition was meant to be afterwards extended to the rest of the Monarchy, but this was not actually done till March 20th, 1809, that is, after Stein's retirement.

(b) Abolition of the Exclusive Right of Building Mills (Mühlenzwang). By an Edict of March 29th, 1808, it was decreed for the Provinces of East Prussia and Lithuania together with the districts of Ermeland and Marienwerder, that this should cease from December 1st, 1808, with compensation to

those deprived of it. This innovation was extended to the rest of the Monarchy by Hardenberg in 1810.

(c) Abolition of the Exclusive Right and Trade-monopoly (*Zunftzwang und Verkaufsmonopol*) of the Guild of Bakers, Slaughterers, and Hucksters.

October 24th, 1808. This was also confined to the Provinces of East and West Prussia and Lithuania. After similar Edicts had been passed for some other trades, the principle that no corporation or individual should have the power of closing a trade against any one was laid down for the whole Monarchy in Hardenberg's Edict of November 1810. It is to be observed however that it was only the exclusiveness of guilds, not guilds themselves, that Stein disapproved of. On the contrary corporations of this kind, bearing the same relation to trade that Orders of Knighthood bear to war, rather pleased his fancy and he desired their continuance and the protection of them in the possession of their corporate property.

Hitherto we have enumerated reforms which were supplementary to the Emancipating Edict. It is time now to speak of innovations of greater magnitude, which stand on a level with the Emancipating Edict itself.

CHAPTER II.

ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM.

OF the other two great reforms of Stein, his Municipal Reform and his Reform of the Administration, it might seem reasonable to describe the former first, because he completed it before he left office, whereas the other was left incomplete. In fact however it is convenient to give precedence to the reform of the Administration, because it was taken in hand earlier, and because a provisional reconstruction was effected early in the summer of 1808 which, as it marks the recommencement of legislation after Stein's return from Berlin, ought not to be spoken of out of its chronological place. According to Schön he slumbered for several months after the great effort of the Emancipating Edict, being dragged down by the people who surrounded him, but roused himself with a great effort when he clearly perceived the feebleness of these advisers, and then created the General Conference. This assertion, made by one of his coadjutors only a few months afterwards, seems to show that the creation

of the General Conference at the beginning of June marked some sort of recommencement on Stein's part. But what Schön describes as inaction appears to be simply the necessary pause in legislation which was caused by his absence in Berlin between February and the end of May, and as to the explanation Schön professes to give of this inactivity it is of a piece with the rest of Schön's explanations. The reader will already have noticed how much Stein's reforms owed to the Minister v. Schrötter, upon whom indeed, as presiding over that province of Prussia the distress of which was the immediate occasion of most of the reforms that were proposed, an exceptional share of responsibility necessarily fell. Yet among the inferior spirits whose influence paralysed Stein's genius, Schön expressly names Schrötter, besides Stägemann, whom he elsewhere mentions with much admiration. It is also to be observed that when in 1809 Schön described Stein thus as a powerful spirit depressed for a time by the influence of inferior society, he cannot have foreseen that some thirty years later it would please him to describe the same Stein at the very same time of his life as a person of common and prejudiced views raised for the moment above himself by the influence of superior society!

On the 7th June then, that is just one week after his return to Königsberg, Stein, not awakening out of a lethargy but leaving behind him diplomacy to take up legislation again, and deciding with the same rapidity which he had shown on his first arrival in the October before, laid before the King a plan of reconstruction of the Administration.

There was indeed nothing strange in this rapidity, for the subject was more completely familiar to Stein's mind than any other. It has been shown above that he had been occupied with it in his retirement at Nassau and that it was the reform which in taking office he was most bent upon effecting. If he allowed only five days to pass after receiving his powers before he issued the Emancipating Edict, he had been still more prompt in setting about his Administrative Reform, for the scheme of this was laid before the King on October 2nd, that is two days before he received his powers. But the question was not so ripe for settlement as that of the emancipation of the serfs. It was necessary to compare his own scheme with that of Hardenberg, which was already in the King's hands. In November and December he kept the subject before his mind, and had communications upon it both with Hardenberg and the King. Upon the outlines of the change to be made there was agreement, and yet little progress was made. To get rid of the French and to reform the Administration seem, as we have observed, to have been the two notions which Stein had in his head when he first reached Memel. When he found how much longer than he had expected the French were likely to stay, it was natural that he should admit the necessity of delaying the Administrative Reform. Until the French were gone the country could only be administered on a provisional system, and he did not seriously set himself to arrange even this provisional system until he had made up his mind at Berlin that nothing but necessity would induce them to go.

It must not be supposed that this Administrative Reform because it was left unfinished by Stein remained unrealised, and is a matter only of speculative interest. His views prevailed, though not till after his retirement. 'Stein,' says v. Rönne, 'became the creator of a new organisation of the State, which on the whole has remained in effective working till the present time, and out of which has grown what has since distinguished the internal Administration of Prussia advantageously from that of other countries.' As of all the innovations of this period it is that which bears most conspicuously the mark of Stein's hand, so it may be doubted whether it is not that which is the most valuable, or at least that which except the Military Reform shows most distinctly the skill of the organising genius. We must also not omit to observe its immense magnitude. As the Emancipating Edict was a kind of reconstruction of society, so was this a reconstruction of government. It was not indeed Stein's fault that it was not much more. Beside the machinery of administration he was prepared to create the machinery of popular control, all those parliamentary institutions which the country did not actually succeed in obtaining but through the revolutionary shocks of 1848. Of this part of the scheme only a fragment remained, the Municipal Reform. But if we exclude even this, what remains may well astonish by its magnitude those who are accustomed to the safe piecemeal reforms of England. What remains is a reconstruction of the whole Administration, not merely of the Ministerial Departments, but of the whole

machinery of Local Government throughout the country. As the Emancipating Edict was Prussia's Fourth of August, this Reform may be compared to that legislative work commenced by the Constituent Assembly and completed by the Consulate, by which Departments took the place of Provinces, Provincial Parliaments and Intendants constantly at war with each other made way for a systematic organisation, and the relations of the Ministry among themselves and to the Head of the Government were determined. It is no doubt only in moments of extreme public need that it can be safe or wise to change so much at once; but when, as in Prussia, such a moment arrives, the country is fortunate indeed which is able to make the change in such a manner that it shall not need to be made again, which can transform itself and then rest satisfied with its new shape.

In describing such momentous constitutional changes it is not wise to give too much importance to chronological arrangement. It may be convenient to quit the narrative form where distinctness and precision in the statement of results is so much more important than anything else. What was the state of the Administration before Stein, what changes he made, and how those changes have worked, this is what the reader will wish to know; by what steps the transformation was made and what provisional forms the Administration took during the process must also be considered, but these matters must be carefully kept in subordination.

It is fortunate that the narrative of Stein's rise through the official hierarchy and of his struggle

with the influence of Beyme has given the reader some acquaintance with the administrative system which he reformed. I need not explain again what is meant in Local Government by a War and Domains Chamber, nor in Central Government by the General Directory or by the Cabinet. We know that those Orders in Cabinet, of which some have been given in full and which were sometimes called Immediate Decisions, did not receive the counter-signature of any Minister. We became familiar long since with the peculiar nature of the Prussian Cabinet, and with the abusive influence of the Cabinet Secretaries. The Privy Council of State we know to have fallen into abeyance, though still nominally subsisting. The General Directory, created originally by Frederick William I., we have observed to have shown a tendency to dissolve into a number of committees for particular branches of government, the Presidents of these committees assuming gradually the character of Ministers. We have seen how Frederick the Great had chosen to govern not through this Directory but alone with his Cabinet Secretaries. The consequence of this had been greatly to strengthen the tendency to dissolution in the Directory. It had now ceased to be the instrument of bringing the Ministers together and creating a common understanding among them, while at the same time other Departments had been created, directed by Ministers who had not even nominally a place in the Directory. The fatal defect of this system may be described in one word by saying that it exposed the country to fall into a condition in which

there should practically be neither King, nor Prime Minister, nor governing Council. The government of Frederick the Great had been that of a King, but it required exceptional energy and experience, and that much more now than in the earlier days of the monarchy. Such government was impossible to Frederick William III., and the system did not allow him to devolve it on an able Minister. For the King did not deliberate with his Ministers but with those unfortunate Cabinet Secretaries of whom we have heard so much, and it is easy to see that the *amateur* suggestions of advisers who had neither responsibility nor official knowledge could not supply the place of statesmanlike wisdom either in a King or a Minister. Meanwhile the Ministers had so little understanding among themselves and were so far from being able to introduce a republican government by Ministerial Council, that Beyme has already told us that there was serious danger of 'a war of all the departments against each other.'

No doubt the King was under no obligation to lean in this way on his Cabinet Secretaries. The practice was a mere abuse, and might have been discontinued by Frederick William III. as easily as it had been commenced by Frederick. No one in fact could prevent the King from asking advice wherever he might believe the best advice was to be found. Thus at the beginning of his reign the King formally nominates Colonel v. Köckeritz to the position of his confidential friend, enjoining him to report to him the public opinion on all questions, reprove him whenever he went wrong and all the more severely when his admonitions seemed to be

ill received, and to be present at all deliberations. Instead of the commonplace Köckeritz had the King nominated Stein or Hardenberg to this post there would not have been so much need of administrative reform ; or again without any reform the King might have resumed the practice of working in the General Directory. But the latter course required a great departure from routine ; as to the former, the King had in fact already adopted it. When Hardenberg and afterwards Stein received dictatorial powers this change was actually made, and it was probably a more important reform than any of those which Stein now proposed. But both Hardenberg and Stein plainly felt the need of a council, and besides this their position was exceptional and could not be made permanent without altering the character of the Monarchy.

It will also appear a matter of course, when we consider the gradual and accidental way in which the Departments had differentiated themselves out of the General Directory, that the distribution of the functions of government should be full of faults and inconveniences. The earliest division of the Directory had been into five Departments, four of which governed each a quarter of the Prussian territory, while the fifth was a general Department of Justice. We see here a mixture of two principles of division, that which follows the nature of the affairs and that which is determined by place ; the rational and local, or, as German writers call it, the provincial and real system. But as was natural at that early time the ruder provincial system predominated. During the reign of Frederick the Great it lost this

predominance; the other principle was more and more adopted, as in the creation of that Mining Department of which so much has been said above. But neither principle was allowed decisively to prevail over the other, and we have frequently had occasion to mention the Minister for the Province of Prussia, whose office continued by the side of those of the Ministers of Finance and War. This confusion in the method of classification was the second great defect in the administrative system. By the collision between different Departments which it necessarily occasioned, it intensified the principal evil which afflicted the administration, its want of unity.

We pass from Central to Local Government. Here corresponds to the General Directory (the full title of which is General Supreme Finance War and Domains Directory) the War and Domains Chamber. The powers of these Chambers had been gradually enlarged so as to cover most of the area of Local Government, in some provinces extending even to ecclesiastical and educational matters. It is important also to take note of an official who acted as a kind of organ of these Chambers in the country districts. This was the Landrath. His office had originated in the Mark of Brandenburg, where in former times the County Estates (Kreisstände) had been in the habit of appointing a deputy to collect the taxes granted by them as well as for other purposes. This deputy had been gradually converted into a Government official and had been subordinated to the War and Domains Chamber at its creation in 1723,

becoming at the same time a member of it. In this office lay the germ of a system of self-government, for the method of appointment was similar to that used in appointing our justices of the peace. He was nominated by the King on the presentation of the proprietors of knightly estates within the county. The agents of the Chamber for towns were *Kriegsräthe* and *Steuerräthe*.

The confusion and want of satisfactory classification which reigned at the centre of administration could not but be reflected in these local Chambers, and a reconstruction of these would necessarily accompany a reform of the Departments. But Stein finds a deficiency in these local institutions which does not strike him so much when he considers the central ones, he finds what we should call a want of liberty. He does no doubt desire parliamentary institutions for Prussia, still this want does not seem to him so pressing that in his criticisms upon the Ministerial Departments, the Directory and the Cabinet, he should think it necessary to say that these institutions cannot work satisfactorily unless a parliament is added. In speaking of local institutions, on the other hand, he does say—indeed he says little else—that the people themselves must be induced to take a share in public business. What we have before us in these reflexions of Stein is nothing less than the genesis of Prussian liberty, and it is not unimportant to observe in what way he is brought to feel the necessity of it. Not any instances of tyranny that he has observed, not any arbitrary or unjust imprisonments, though such undoubtedly he could remember, influence his mind.

He expresses no indignation at the want of liberty in Prussia, he does not seem to think of it as a right unjustly denied to the people and calling for vigorous assertion on their part. Indeed it rather strikes him as denied by the people to the Government, and as something which the Government must in sheer self-defence force on the people. For he remarks how much more cheaply Local Government could be conducted if the local proprietors would undertake the burden of it without pay, how much disaffection towards the Government would be spared, how greatly the spirit of monarchy would be revived, and how much the quality and prestige of Local Government would at the same time be improved. To the people also he thinks the change would be advantageous, but not so much because it would relieve them from tyranny as because it would 'direct their energies to the common welfare and divert them from indolent sensuality or the spinning of empty metaphysical cobwebs or the pursuit of purely selfish objects'.

Stein undertook to reform both central and local administration. On November 24th, 1808, which was the very day on which he laid down his office, the royal assent was given to an Edict 'concerning the altered constitution of the supreme administrative Departments in the Prussian Monarchy'. To become law it had still to pass through another stage, that of publication, and this it never did. A hundred copies of it were printed but not published, the new Ministers being not prepared to accept all the innovations which it contained. But on December 18th, and in the name of the new Ministers, was

issued an Edict which is identical in the principal points.

The Reform of the Provincial Administration received not less attention. It was at first intended to be applied, like so many of Stein's reforms, only to the Province of Prussia, but after such a measure had been prepared the resolution was taken to extend it to the whole Monarchy. The work of revision thus made necessary was not completed till November 19th, and accordingly this measure also did not become law until Stein had ceased to be Minister. The Ordinance for an improved arrangement of the Provincial Police and Finance Boards bears date December 26th, 1808. These two Ordinances are the basis of the existing Administration of Prussia, and it will be seen that they are both substantially the work of Stein. In details, of course, the system which they created has undergone much alteration both in the time of Hardenberg and since.

The first of these Ordinances (in the form which Stein gave it) offers a striking contrast in its length to the Emancipating Edict, the few and short paragraphs of which I was able to give nearly in full. It occupies fifty very closely printed pages in Pertz. I must endeavour to select the principal points. Here is the introduction.

It is decreed that a new arrangement of the administrative system, improved and adapted to the progress made by the spirit of the time, to the altered situation which external circumstances have brought about, and to the new requirements of the State, be introduced.

All arrangements up to this time existing in respect to the administration of affairs are entirely abolished.

The principal object of the new constitution is to give to the

administration of affairs the greatest possible unity, energy and activity, to cause it to converge to a highest point, and in the simplest and most convenient manner to place at its disposal all the powers of the whole nation and of the individual. To this end the direction of the Government will henceforth proceed from a single higher point immediately subordinate to the Head of the State.

From this point not only will the whole be overseen but a powerful direct influence will at the same time be brought to bear on the administration. The smallest possible number of highest officials will stand at the head of Departments simply and naturally assigned to the principal branches of administration; in closest connexion with the Ruler they will guide the Departments according to his commands communicated to them directly, combining independence and free initiative with complete responsibility, and in this way they will work upon the administration of the lower organs, which will be formed in the same way.

The nation will receive a share corresponding to its true interest and to the end aimed at in the conduct of the Government, inasmuch as opportunity will be given to distinguished talent in every rank and situation to display itself for the benefit of the administration, and inasmuch as newly organised Estates of the Kingdom and their representatives will be summoned to deliberation alone or in conjunction with State officials, the former in Assemblies of Estates constitutionally formed, the latter in the subordinate organs of the State. In this way the development of the nation will be promoted, public spirit awakened, and the whole conduct of affairs made simpler, stronger and less costly.

A comprehensive programme!

The chief means of restoring unity to the administration is the creation or, we might say, the revival of the Council of State.

This is to be under the presidency of the King or some Representative named for the purpose. It is to consist of (*a*) the Princes of the Royal Family who have attained the age of 18 years, (*b*) all the Ministers, (*c*) certain Privy Councillors; these are

to be of various classes, for instance, any persons in whom the King may have confidence, past Ministers, heads of sub-divisions of the Ministerial Departments, particularly the Interior and Finance, Referendaries without vote, selected from the provincial governments, to form a political seminary (Pepinière).

This Council, like the General Directory, is to conduct ordinary business in Divisions, a Minister presiding. The Ministries are five in number, (1) the Interior, (2) Finance, (3) Foreign Affairs, (4) War, (5) Justice. But there is also to be a Cabinet composed almost solely of Ministers and presided over by any Member of the Council whom the King may nominate for that purpose.

But the Council also assembles as a whole (Plenum) under the presidency of the King or Member of the Council named by him. All legislation, all matters affecting more than one Department or questions in dispute between Departments, with a general control of the administration, as well as appointments to certain higher posts, and the accounts of the Ministers, are to be brought before the Plenum.

Then follows the organisation of the different Departments.

The Department of the Interior is sub-divided into (*a*) the Department of general Police, (*b*) the Department of Trade, (*c*) the Department of Cultus and Public Instruction, (*d*) the Department of General Legislation for Finance and the Interior, (*e*) the Department of Health, (*f*) the Department of Mining, Coinage, Salt and Porcelain Manufacture.

The Department of Finance is sub-divided into (a) the Department of Treasury, Bank and Lottery, (b) the Department of Domains and Forests, (c) the Department of Direct and Indirect Taxes.

The Heads of these sub-divisions are in most cases also to be Members of the Council.

Such is the outline of Stein's scheme as contained in the Ordinance which received the royal assent but was not published. The Ministry which succeeded him however recommended the King to postpone the creation of the Council of State until his return to Berlin; it seemed to them a cumbrous machine. Accordingly in the actual law of December 18th, particular regulations as to the Council of State were reserved, though it was still spoken of as the great organ of administration. When Hardenberg in October 1810 legislated on ~~this~~ subject, the Council of State took a somewhat new character. In this scheme it retains the legislative powers which Stein gave to the Plenum of his Council, but loses its function of controlling the administration. In this new character it was realised, though not till 1817, and still nominally subsists, but has now little practical importance since the work of legislation now naturally belongs to the Parliament. Meanwhile a new body, the Ministry of State or collective assembly of Ministers, was created. Such an assembly is vaguely referred to in the Ordinance of December 18th, 1808. In Hardenberg's time it began its effective existence, and is now, in Mr Morier's words, the real centre of the entire mechanism.

In this point then there has been a serious

departure from Stein's idea. The administration gained no doubt as much unity as he intended, but not so much steadiness. Relieved from all control, 'the Ministerial system acquired a growing omnipotence unknown alike to the French and English administrative system¹,' and Prussia became 'the country of Europe in which the Ministerial system was most decisively developed².' Even the introduction of a Parliament, a generation later, has, according to the same authority, in some respects increased instead of diminishing this centralisation.

It may be well to warn the reader at the same time against the notion which is likely to occur to him, that this departure from Stein's plan was in the direction of the English system. Even now the Ministry of State is widely different from the English Cabinet.

The Prussian Minister President is functionally only the chairman of a Board. It is the Board which decides, by a majority of votes. Whenever therefore an important question, such as a new law or any other matter for which the Constitution requires the sanction of the Ministry of State in its corporate capacity, is brought before it, the Minister President runs the risk in common with each of his colleagues of being outvoted, without this in any way constitutionally altering his position or requiring his resignation³.

But in the absence of Parliaments such a Ministry of State, being utterly uncontrolled, would have scarcely any resemblance to an English Cabinet, which is only too rigidly and vexatiously controlled,

¹ Gneist 83.

² *Ib.* 140.

³ Morier, Cobden Club Essays, 1875, p. 417.

whereas Stein's Council of State would have supplied a check upon the Ministers something like that which we find in Parliament.

Along with Stein's Council of State disappears his Cabinet. Something like the old Cabinet which had given him so much trouble in former days was revived in Hardenberg's time, and there exists even now an institution called the King's Privy Cabinet. Up to 1848 special Cabinet Ministers, who may remind us of Beyme, continued to be appointed. It has been already mentioned that v. Thile, who first brought to Stein the news of the attack upon him in the *Moniteur*, held this office under Frederick William IV. But the abuse of such officials keeping the Departmental Ministers at a distance from the King, was finally swept away by the provision in Article 44 of the Constitution of 1850, that the countersignature of a responsible Minister is necessary to every act of Government.

The Ministerial Departments created by Stein have been retained to the present day, and of all his administrative innovations it is this which most strikes the eye. But the Ministers who now form the Ministry of State are eight in number instead of five. There have been added a Minister of Trade, Industry and Public Works, a Minister of Agricultural Affairs, and a Minister of Ecclesiastical, Educational and Sanitary Affairs. It will be observed that the change which has been made consists in raising into independent Departments what Stein, probably in order to keep his promise that the ultimate control should be in the hands of

the smallest possible number of Ministers, had made sub-departments of the Ministry of the Interior.

The Ordinance defines with great precision the responsibility of each Minister and his relation to the King, to the other Ministers, to the Council of State, and to his subordinates. Many of the principles laid down were adopted in later legislation, though the creation of the Ministry of State in 1817 and still more the creation of a Parliament by the Constitution of 1850, changed those relations considerably. But however much might be changed in detail, rigid principle and precise definitions were once for all introduced where before there had reigned confusion and arbitrariness.

The relations of the Minister to his official staff seem to have remained much as Stein fixed them. The Minister has undivided responsibility, and the Councillors only consultative functions. But subdivisions of the Department exist, presided over by a Director whose subordinates again have only consultative functions, but on the other hand whose decisions may be reversed by the Minister.

Among minor institutions with which this great organiser has enriched his country, may here be mentioned the Statistical Office, which appears in his scheme under the head of the Department of the Interior. This had been created by him before the war, when he had the Department of Finance. A book on the National Wealth of Prussia, by a certain Leopold Krug, had suggested to him the advisableness of collecting and arranging the statistical information which was sent in to the Provincial

Departments (then still existing) from the War and Domains Chambers. He proposed to create an office for this purpose and embodied his plan in a report, in which he estimated the cost of such an office and showed how it might be met. His proposal received the royal assent on May 28th, 1805 and the office was created, but the convulsions which followed had prevented it as yet from displaying much activity. It now appears again assigned to its proper place in the great administrative scheme. It has since flourished, and in 1861 a Central Commission for Statistics was added. In regulations for it, issued by the Ministry of the Interior, it is provided that an annual course, both theoretical and practical, of instruction in official statistics shall be instituted, which shall include both lectures and practical exercises.

In another way, Stein sought to connect Government with science. A prominent feature in his scheme is the Scientific Technical Deputation, that is, a body of specialists who may be consulted by Government when there is occasion; for example, such a deputation, consisting of medical experts, is attached to the Sanitary Department. Stein goes so far as to organise a Plenum or collective assembly of all these deputations. The principle has taken root and several such Technical Deputations now exist.

Let us pass to the reconstruction of Local Government by the Ordinance of December 26th. The most conspicuous change made here consists in the abolition of the War and Domains Chamber. Thus the whole system of Frederick William I., the

General Directory at the centre of affairs together with the War and Domains Chamber in the provinces, passes away together. In place of the War and Domains Chamber, came the Government (*Regierung*) the authority of which extended in the main over the same area, now called a district (*Bezirk*). This new organisation has continued to the present day, and below the Provinces, the first subdivision of the German territory is still into Government Districts. The change extended far beyond nomenclature, since the Government differed substantially from the War and Domains Chamber.

The War and Domains Chamber had been originally, as its name imports, charged with the affairs of the Domains, the principal source of revenue, and of the Army, the principal object of revenue; in other words, it had been mainly financial. But in the course of time, as a convenient nucleus, it had gathered to itself most of the functions of Local Government. In particular it had acquired a judicial as well as an administrative character. All matters connected with the financial administration or with rural police were brought before the Justice Deputation of the Chamber, which was distinct from the Financial Board and consisted of persons learned in the law. At the same time the Chamber exercised in most parts of the Monarchy a tutelage like that of the French Intendants over the affairs of the localities.

By the change now made the whole machinery of administrative justice was swept away. The new Governments had no judicial character, and along

with the Justice Deputations there were abolished the Administrative Courts of Appeal, called the Supreme Revision College and the Supreme Revision Deputation, that had existed in connexion with the General Directory. Administration and Justice were for the first time decisively separated. All cases which hitherto had been decided by the Chambers, including those in which the Fiscus was interested, were henceforth to be tried by the local Tribunals. These Tribunals at the same time received a new organisation with the title Superior Rural Tribunals (*Oberlandesgerichte*), and were deprived of a number of administrative functions which had hitherto belonged to them.

At the same time it was intended to relieve the Governments of all that responsibility for communal affairs with which the War and Domains Chambers had been burdened. Stein had in view a new constitution for the Communes, by which it is supposed he would have introduced throughout the Monarchy local liberties such as those he had made the acquaintance of long before in the County Mark, now lost to Prussia. These plans however he was not allowed time to realise.

Having in this way relieved the local administrative organ of all work which was either not properly administrative or could be trusted to the people themselves, he was now able to assign to his Governments all local work which was properly administrative. Functions which had been divided hitherto not according to any principle, but merely to suit a momentary convenience, among a miscellany of authorities which had been created at

different times, were now united in the department of the Government technically so called.

The change resembles that which took place here when the Poor Law Board made way for the Local Government Board.

In the constitution of these Governments Stein applied the principles he had already laid down for the central Departments. A President was set over the whole. The Board was divided into a number of Deputations, for Police, for Ecclesiastical and Educational Affairs, for Finance, and for Military Affairs, at the head of each of which a Director was placed, and it only met as a Plenum when matters affecting more than one subdivision or fundamental principles of administration were in question.

By his remodelling of the District Stein did for local government what he was doing at the same time for the whole State by his reconstruction of the Ministerial Departments. The District would henceforth be in respect of government a reflexion in small of the country itself. But meanwhile what has become of the Provinces, larger divisions than the Districts and more prominent in the history of Prussia? We remember that in that same age the Provinces of France still more renowned, Languedoc, Burgundy, Anjou, disappeared from the map and were spoken of no more among existing realities. They gave place to administrative districts such as those we have just been considering; and perhaps the line of thought along which we have been led may make it intelligible to us how, looked at from the official point of view, they became superfluous.

The District, or in French nomenclature the Department, differs from the Province in this, that it is younger than the State, whereas the Province is older. The former is a division, the latter a component part. The former is created for convenience and because the whole country is too large to be dealt with all together, the latter existed outside the country before it became a part of it, and it was by putting together a number of such Provinces that the country became large. Naturally therefore the mere organiser disregards Provinces, for they do not concern the State as a unity, being only historical memorials of the time when it was not yet a unity. Accordingly we find that in the discussions on the Prussian Constitution in 1848, it was proposed to abolish the Provinces, and it was argued that 'the division into Provinces was superfluous and even mischievous, since in consequence of it different parts of the country are held together by the effect of origin and history, though they have no proper unity and though the connexion is purely burdensome to those united.' On the other side it was maintained and with success that 'in most of the Provinces the effect of history could not be erased,' and 'that this tie more than any other had retained a peculiar vitality.'

We are not surprised to find that Stein took the conservative side on this question, because we know that the Revolution he conducted differed from the French both in the respect it showed for history and in the doctrine it borrowed from Spain, that the civic union should be founded upon the natural or clannish union, the state upon the nation. But

in his own exposition of his views, he does not give the conservative reason for retaining the Province, but other reasons drawn from the utility of the provincial organisation. In one of his first Reports on Administrative Reform, dated November 23rd, 1807, he lays down the following as a general principle in local government :

The simplest and most vital union possible between the Departments and the subordinate organs must be restored. By special intermediate Authorities we must facilitate the superintendence of all branches of the Administration in whole Provinces, and cause them to work more harmoniously together in affairs where this is of peculiar importance. Through these Authorities, charged with an extraordinary superintendence, the Departments will obtain the necessary organs to which the execution of affairs which extend over large parts of the Monarchy may be committed, and which may be looked to for an impartial living control, as well as for giving more apt advice than can be expected from Boards which take a narrower view.

On this principle he recommends the appointment of Superior Presidents governing Provinces. He remarks that the provincial system of classification is now to be abandoned for the real system in the constitution of the Departments, but that

It is important particularly in certain administrative affairs to have a larger executive unit, namely the Province. This is especially the case in the matters of civil administration which concern the military system and in the larger affairs concerning the universal police of the Monarchy. It is moreover important for the Central Departments to have organs which in various cases can report from a point of view commanding whole Provinces. This is particularly the case in respect of the affairs just named. Lastly, the Department wants organs which may exert in its name

for the most part on the spot a close and living and not merely formal control over all the lower Authorities together. All these objects together are to be attained by the appointment of Superior Presidents.

Such are the considerations on which Stein grounds the creation of an institution which still exists. At the beginning, however, only three Superior Presidents were appointed, one for East Prussia, Lithuania and West Prussia, one for the Kurmark, the Neumark and Pomerania, and one for Silesia. Since 1815 each Province has had its Superior President. In 1817 and again in 1825 an Instruction was issued defining his functions, but Stein's original idea does not seem to have been abandoned. The Superior President still combines (1) the superintendence of affairs affecting many Districts at once, such as sanitary arrangements, cattle plagues, &c. and particularly cooperation with the Generals commanding the local Corps d'armée, presidency in the educational and medicinal Boards; (2) general oversight of all the Governments within the Province (which, however, does not include any share in the detail of their administration), hearing grievances, &c. ; (3) the representation of the Central Government, for instance in cases of conflict between Governments, of extraordinary occurrences calling for immediate action, &c. He is commonly at the same time President of the Government which has its seat in the place where he resides, but in this case he is at liberty to appoint a Vice-president.

In the title, Superior President, there was of course nothing new. Stein himself, we remember, had been Superior President of the Westphalian

Chambers. It was probably his experience in that office and his feeling of the value of the services of those Provincial Ministers, such as Schrötter, whom his reform was to sweep away, that put him upon this plan of a kind of local Minister of State. His Superior Presidents were to be members of the Council of State, and were to assemble annually for a time in Berlin, where they were to render an account of the state of their Province. Nevertheless it is to be observed that the plan was not at the beginning universally approved and that objections have been made to it since. Stein's principal advisers in his Provincial Reform were his old friend Count Reden and Ludwig v. Vincke. This part of the scheme though approved by the former was disapproved by the latter. He believed that it would be difficult to find men qualified to hold the post of Superior President. Instead, he proposed to give the Ministers Civil Aides-de-camp appointed for three years, who should spend most of their time in travelling through the Provinces. This did not please either Reden or Stein, and the latter remarked, 'A regular public institution is better than Assistants and a Seminary like this.'

In later times, as I have said, the proposal has been made to abolish the Province altogether. But apart from this, weighty opinions have been given against the office of Superior President. F. v. Raumer says that it is an institution which assumes that the Governments will govern ill rather than well, that the Superior President cannot be present in three or four places where the Governments placed under him are; he is not present at the sittings, and

has no complete oversight of the affairs; thus nothing remains to him but the right of asking and objecting, which leads usually to a purely useless increase of labour. He was to stimulate activity in the Provinces, but if the Governments and Ministry were well-manned, such stimulus was not wanted, and the Superior President by his intervention can only create confusion. Again, the Superior Presidents were not to be a Court of Intermediate Appeal, but they must necessarily be so or else never be heard of. This last sentence refers to a principle laid down by Stein, which has been in fact, as v. Raumer thinks it must needs be, abandoned in the later Instructions. Gneist's opinion of the practical working of this institution, at least in its present form, is also unfavourable.

A complete reconstruction of the whole framework of government, such as Stein had in view, required in addition to the changes already described new Constitutions for the Circle (Kreis), the Township, and the Commune. It also required an organisation of popular control and of self-government, which was promised (see above) in the preamble to the Ordinance of November 24th, though that Ordinance contains actually no provisions on the subject. For the Circle and the Commune nothing was actually done in Stein's time, though much was meditated. But the reconstruction of the Township was completely accomplished, and here alone Stein was able to carry into effect his ideas of popular self-government. We proceed then to consider the Municipal Reform (Städteordnung).



CHAPTER III.

MUNICIPAL REFORM.

STEIN'S reforms, so far as we have yet followed them, have appeared to run parallel to those of the French Revolution. They have, in a certain sense, introduced liberty; for they have emancipated the serf from his master, and every class alike from the trammels of unalterable *status*. But political liberty, or liberty in the sense in which the word is generally used in England, we have not yet seen Stein introducing in any degree. We have not seen him giving the people any control over their rulers. Popular institutions, as they are called, that is, a machinery by which the people elect or depose or criticise or counsel their rulers, or announce the general principles according to which they wish government to be conducted, were not given to Prussia either by the Emancipating Edict, or by the Administrative Reform. It is now time to consider how much he accomplished in this direction.

This, it is well known, is the weak side of the French Revolution. France did indeed give herself

parliamentary assemblies, which, in the proper sense, were unknown to the old regime, and which she has never since lost. But the efficiency of these assemblies was almost annihilated by Napoleon; and when they were strengthened again at the Restoration, it was found difficult to make them work in harmony with the executive Government. They were always too strong or too weak, until the Napoleonic system, which reduces them to a nullity, was revived. Stein's work may seem to halt still more on this side. He created no Parliaments but left the King as absolute as he found him. For a whole generation after his Ministry, it might appear that France had more liberty than Prussia. F. v. Raumer, in a tract published in 1828, remarks, 'In Paris we are often obliged to hear it said: "We live in a constitutional country, while you, you know—" In spite of the polite suppression of the rest of the sentence, this simply means, We are free, but you are still slaves and subject to an unchecked tyranny.' He goes on however to urge that this is a mistake. Prussia, it is true, has no Parliament, but it has something else. What is this? It has municipal institutions, created by Stein in the Ordinance of Nov. 19th, 1808, and to which France can show nothing similar.

It appears then that we ought not to represent Prussia as having been left, in this respect, simply a stage behind France, as having had in the period between 1808 and the German Revolution of 1848 no representative institutions, while France had representative institutions which worked ill. The difference between the two countries was more instructive. It consisted in this, that whereas both

had made a commencement of representative institutions, France had commenced them at the top, and Prussia at the bottom. France had adopted from constitutional States that which is most conspicuous, viz. the Parliament, but had neglected municipal liberties; Prussia had created free municipalities and avowed her intention of ultimately creating Parliaments, but delayed commencing this second work. It is now clear from the result that France at any rate was wrong. Prussia in her more modest course has advanced slowly, but she has not as yet had to undo anything that she had done.

It is to be observed, that the slowness of Prussia's progress in representative institutions, which drew upon the Government so much blame in the latter part of Frederick William III.'s reign, is in no way to be attributed to Stein, whether it be called prudence or timidity and perfidy. It was neither from timidity, nor even from a cautious preference for gradual progress, that he refrained from crowning his edifice, but simply from want of time. Had he continued in office, he would, no doubt, have created a Prussian Parliament; nor does he seem to have in any case admitted the necessity of spreading great changes over a great space of time.

The Municipal Reform then ought by no means to rank below the other two great reforms of Stein in point of importance. Less comprehensive, for it affected only the towns, whereas the Emancipating Edict affected the whole of society and the Administrative Reform the whole of government, it was at the same time more novel and original. In the Emancipating Edict we have seen in the main an

adoption of the social side of the French Revolution; and the Administrative Reform, though it had important original features, might be thought to have been in its general scope suggested by the French Revolution. But in the Municipal Reform Stein broke with French principles, and that just at the moment when the rest of Germany was reforming its Municipalities in accordance with them. That political movement of the 18th century, which first enters into actual history with the legislation of Joseph II., though from its most complete achievement we call it the French Revolution, abolishes the distinction between town and country. The Commune with its Mayor, which in old France was only found in the town, has now spread itself over the whole country of France, and is in fact only the civil parish. On the other hand, the great towns have lost their unity. There is not now one Mayor of Paris but many Mayors of its many arrondissements, one of whom, who is at the same time Prefect of the Department of the Seine, is regarded as the central Mayor. It is unnecessary to add that, in these new units of local government, there has been no liberty; that the mayors have been appointed by Government, and that the Councils have had only a consultative function. Now this was the system which Stein found in fashion; it was this which a statesman, who wished to be thought advanced and on a level with his age, was tempted to adopt. It had already in 1808 spread over a great part of Germany. The French themselves introduced it into the Grand Duchy of Berg, and the Kingdom of Westphalia. In the territories of

the Confederation of the Rhine it 'was in many cases imitated and once or twice actually copied. For example, it was regularly copied in the Grand Duchy of Frankfurt, and the Duchy of Anhalt Köthen; it was imitated in Bavaria in the year 1808.' (Maurer, *Städteverfassung*, Vol. iv. p. 300.)

But (the same writer continues) in other states again an effort was made to stem the foreign tide. The old free municipal organisation, already decayed in most of the territories, was taken up again and greater liberties and greater independence granted to the Towns. This was done in Prussia in 1808 by the great Minister Freiherr vom Stein, who like the great reformer Ulrich v. Hutten three hundred years before him did not think it beneath the dignity of his Imperial Knighthood to serve the great ideas and interests that influenced his age. And his example has been followed later by several other states. Thus did the Prussian Municipal Reform of 1808 make an epoch for all Germany.

For, as we learn from this passage, this Municipal Reform, though it ran counter to the movement of that age, has proved as successful as it was original. It has indeed been modified since by a new ordinance of date 1831; so much was to be expected considering the great extent of the innovations which it introduced. But there seems a remarkable agreement of authorities that, on the whole, it has worked well. The tract already quoted by Friedrich v. Raumer, though mainly devoted to criticism of its details and to suggesting amendments in it, begins with the assertion above cited, that it constitutes an equivalent to Prussia for the Parliamentary institutions which Prussia still wanted, and ends with the declaration that

The Municipal Reform ought to be maintained as a salutary law in its substantial parts, and the more minute provisions still

needed are not in opposition to the freedom which it aims at, but ought only to be a further development and advancement of what has been so nobly and successfully commenced. Evils, which here and there oppress the towns, have not been the consequences of that ordinance; it has everywhere met with deserved approbation and particularly where the most important towns are to be found.

Let me add here the emphatic judgment of Dahlmann :

Nowhere perhaps was the situation of the Townships more precarious than in Prussia, if we follow Prussian authors themselves. There was the most complete dependence on the Provincial Executive, which it was vain to withstand with chartered rights; and the magistrates, often strangers to the town, indemnified themselves for the pressure they suffered from above by that which they inflicted upon those below them. But Prussia took a step which showed the utmost strength of will in an almost desperate situation. The battle of Jena had been but the outward exhibition of the deep internal discord which went through all classes of its people. Thrice blessed who has the courage to learn from experience! they were bent upon an inward recovery to enable them to meet the external enemy. The Baron vom Stein, by laying here the foundation of the salvation of Prussia, became in a deeper sense than King Henry, who could but build fortresses, the Town-builder of Germany.

We observe, then, in this Municipal Reform, in which the French example was so boldly and happily rejected, the second great point of difference between the great European or Anti-Napoleonic Revolution, which began in 1808, and the French Revolution of the last century. Its respect for the principle of nationality was the first and most conspicuous; the second was its respect for local and municipal liberties. In the one it followed the lead of Spain, in the other it took its lesson from England.

That is, it followed England generally in adopting the principle of self-government; we have the clearest right to say this because, in everything which he has written on the subject, Stein refers to the example of England. But the imitation was certainly far from being close, because of all the English institutions the borough was in Stein's time the most corrupt. He adapted to the Township in Prussia some general principles, of which he had admired the working in the English County. So far was he from imitating the English borough, that the very contrary has been asserted. It has sometimes been hinted by German writers, that the Municipal Corporations Act of our Reform Ministry was borrowed from Stein's measure; and assuredly it would have been no disgrace, but rather natural and praiseworthy, that our reformers should examine and profit by such a successful experiment tried in Prussia. Yet every Englishman feels instinctively convinced that our reformers did no such thing. What English statesman of that age would have dreamed of going to Prussia for lessons in self-government? What English statesman of that age knew anything of Stein's legislation? I have looked through the debates and Blue books in which the history of our Municipal Corporations Act is to be found, and I have only met with one slight allusion to Stein's measure; it is in a speech by Mr Ewart.

The Municipal Reform appeared to be, and in some degree really was, the revival of an ancient institution, the restoration of liberties that had been lost rather than a first step in the path of liberty. The township had flourished throughout Germany

in the Middle Ages before the greatness of the House of Hohenzollern began. It had had a long and eventful development, uniform in the main throughout Germany, and strangely similar to the earlier stages in the constitutional development of ancient Rome. It had begun with a Government of Families (*Geschlechter*) answering to the patrician *gentes* of Rome. Outside these families had sprung up a mixed population, like the Roman *plebs*, which organizing itself in guilds (*Zünfte*), had struggled for a share in the government. As at Rome, they had prevailed. The families had in some States been driven out, in some merged in the guilds, and in some had retained a fragment of their former power. A new kind of citizenship had been created, unconnected with landed property and introducing a new and revolutionary idea into the jurisprudence of the feudal world. It was said of the citizen of this age, that he was no man's lord and no man's servant—

Niemand's Herr und Niemand's Knecht
Das ist des Bürgerstandes Recht.

The age of the Crusades had been the golden time of these old municipalities; from them had proceeded almost all the reforms by which Germany had stepped out of the Middle Age, and their historian (G. L. Maurer) crowns their panegyric by asserting that without the Towns probably there would have been no Reformation.

But all this had long passed away. A great change in the economic system of the world had affected the cities of Germany as a seaport is affected when the sea gradually recedes from its quays. The commerce of Germany with the East, which had

been stimulated by the Crusades, was almost destroyed by the fall of the Byzantine Empire and by the discovery of a sea route to India. The decay which followed is measured by the fact that the Hansa, which had numbered 85 towns, now dwindled to three. What had been thus begun was completed by war. The Rhenish and Westphalian towns especially suffered from the long war which rose out of the Revolt of the Netherlands. The Thirty Years War affected all Germany, laying a great proportion of the towns in ruins and impoverishing the whole of society. At the beginning of the eighteenth century German industry had been reduced to the lowest point. With their prosperity the towns lost their liberty. Their greatness had depended very mainly on the misgovernment and confusion that prevailed in the Territories that surrounded them and in the Empire itself. But the very reforms which overflowed from the towns into the Territories undermined this greatness. When a tolerable police was established over the whole country, it ceased to be necessary for the towns to support troops and league themselves with other towns for the common protection; and with the public need public spirit was relaxed. Still more fatal to them was the growth of another power, the territorial sovereignty (*Landeshoheit*). Standing armies ushered in a period of absolutism over the whole Continent. In Germany there established itself a multiform absolutism, not the absolutism of the Elective Emperor, who, on the contrary, faded to a shadow, but the absolutism of the Princes. Hence the towns fell into two classes, those related to the

Emperor and those looking to some Prince. The Imperial Towns, since the Empire had not gained strength, did not lose their liberties along with their wealth and prosperity, but the Country Towns (Landstädte), who were related to the Princes as the others were to the Empire, were gradually enslaved by the Territorial Sovereignty.

As this Sovereignty was nowhere more powerful than in Prussia, so the enslavement of the towns was nowhere more complete. The introduction of the Excise, which we have marked as the starting-point of Prussian Finance, was a decisive triumph over them; and the organisation of 1723, which established the War and Domains Chambers, commenced the subjection of them to central authority. An official called the Tax Administrator (Steuer-rath) was charged with the function of controlling the Town Councils. What completed the humiliation of the citizens was a plan which had been adopted in the interest of the army. It was arranged, —I suppose, as the cheapest system of military retirement,—that the city magistracies, except where they demanded legal skill, should be filled up with invalided soldiers.

F. v. Raumer's account of the condition of the towns before Stein's reform is as follows :

The magistrates in some places filled up their number by co-optation, but for the most part they were nominated by the Government, and since the second half of the eighteenth century the citizens had had no influence worth mentioning either in this or in respect of the taxes, accounts, &c. Thus the Town fell into two entirely unconnected parts. The completely disenfranchised part submitted grudgingly, seeing in the Magistrates

(often quite justly) nothing but partial interested opponents, and at the same time these apparently unlimited despots did not at all enjoy their omnipotence. For in the first place many posts of Burgomaster, Treasurer, Councillor, were treated as comfortable berths for invalid Quarter-Masters and serjeants who were pushed in among the magistrates without regard to competence or incompetence; and secondly these men were under the strictest Government tutelage, scarcely allowed to make or carry out the most trifling decision without its approval. Besides this, almost all the towns were subject to the oversight of a Tax Administrator in the neighbourhood, and that means a man whose examination certificate would not have qualified him to be on the Local Government Board, and yet was thought good enough to dictate to ten or a dozen corporations.

That a commencement of popular institutions was made in the towns rather than either in the Central Government as in France, or in the Circle as the example of England might have suggested, is probably not to be attributed to any deliberate judgment of the legislator. Judging by the rapidity with which his innovations were made and the intentions which he announced, we may be sure that had he enjoyed a few more months of office he would have created a Parliament, and would have followed up his Municipal Reform (*Städteordnung*) with a Circle or County Reform (*Kreisordnung*). But the innovation was easier in the towns, where liberties had once existed, than either in the country districts or at the centre of government. In France it was natural, in extreme public need, to think of summoning the States General, because a States General had met in former times; it was much less natural in Prussia, where no such national assembly had ever been known. In the country districts also,

UGH!

where serfdom still existed, it would have been premature to introduce political liberty, either before or even at the same time with personal liberty. But the towns lent themselves to the purposes of the legislator; there but one abuse called for removal, and that an abuse of modern growth, the practice of administrative interference, and nothing needed to be called into existence which had not, though in a somewhat different form, existed there before.

Here, as in the case of the Administrative Reform, I shall have little narrative to offer. No enthusiastic public meetings were held, no dramatic debates took place; I can tell of no crushing replies, no perorations delivered at sunrise, no apt classical quotations. As before, my chief study will be to state precisely what was enacted, and of that which was enacted how much is still law in Prussia.

In the Emancipating Edict we saw Stein accepting ideas suggested by others; in the Administrative Reform, on the contrary, working out original ideas, which probably few shared with him. The Municipal Reform seems to have risen about simultaneously in his own mind and in public opinion. It is demanded by the public voice, but at the same time we observe that Stein has not waited for this public demand but has anticipated it, and already, upon his own private conviction, taken action in the matter. It seems that the experiences of the war had convinced a number of people at once of the necessity of giving more independence to the municipalities. There had been found such a lifelessness in the existing system, whenever in the course of the a township had been called upon for a sudden

effort of self-defence, that it had been necessary in some cases actually to invite the free action of the citizens, and, as it were, create free municipalities *extempore*. Thus the thing needed was clearly pointed out by the instinctive *nîsus* of society in its distress; and it is remarkable that precisely the opposite tendency appeared in France during the Revolution. There, as we know, municipalities had been called into existence at the beginning, in the general enthusiasm for liberty; but as soon as the pressure of actual conditions came to correct theory they were extinguished again, and a rigorous uniform despotism was in the end established in local government. It was complained that the municipalities were nests of royalism, asylums for all the political opinions which the revolutionary faction desired to extinguish. In other words, that fatal internal discord which stained the Revolution with so much crime at the same time vitiated the institutions which sprang out of it. While in Prussia, nothing but new vigour was to be expected from inviting the co-operation of the citizens in public affairs, to do so in France was to open the flood-gates of so much pent-up hatred as would paralyse the State in its resistance to external enemies.

We have already seen Stein in his retirement at Nassau writing his opinion of the essential importance of calling in the gratuitous co-operation of the people; at the same time, it appears, an official at Königsberg, named Brand, was drawing up a plan of municipal self-government, founded on observations made during the war. When he had become Minister, Stein at once set about realising his own

views by commissioning Schrötter to draught a law on the subject, and becoming acquainted with Brand's plan, urged him to cause it to be presented to the King, in the name of the citizens of Königsberg. This was done. On July 15th came an Immediate Representation from the Aldermen (Aeltesten) of Königsberg, calling for a legal representation of the citizens. On July 25th their application was sent to Schrötter, as Minister for the Province, by the King, accompanied with a Cabinet Order drawn and countersigned by Stein. In this Cabinet Order it is pointed out that the application points to 'a universal organisation of Municipalities, which would not only free them from the fetters of useless and cumbrous formalities, but also revive their public and civic patriotism, which is annihilated by their exclusion from all share in the administration of municipal affairs.' The commission is then given to Schrötter of 'draughting a plan both of representation of the citizens, and of organisation of the executive magistracies, and at the same time considering the conditions of the different towns in respect of extent and population, and of conferring with the Municipal Estates on the subject and of sending in the whole for ratification, in order that the alteration of the municipal organisation may be accomplished as soon as possible.'

Stein is seen here at work in his usual manner. A suggestion which referred to a single locality only is seized by him and elevated into a comprehensive and momentous scheme, and at the same time brought at once half way to reality by the decisive energy with which it is taken up.

The matter now passed into the hands of Schrötter, who had now before him, to assist his own reflexions, not only the proposals of Brand but also those of another Königsberg official, named Frey, *page 14* who had also been called on by Stein for his views. In his own Provincial Department, Schrötter now invited the help of other experienced officials, Morgenbesser, a friend of Kant, of whom a high opinion was entertained, Friese and Wilkens. The last, in particular, appears to have rendered much help. On September 9th, the result of these deliberations was brought to Stein in the shape of a 'Constitution for all the Towns in East Prussia, Lithuania, and West Prussia, together with an Instruction for the Representatives of the Citizens.' So far the scheme is still provincial; but when it returns into Stein's hands, it begins to be considered from the point of view of the whole State. It has still to pass through two important stages. What was the Immediate Commission has now, since Stein's return from Berlin, changed its name, and is become a kind of Department belonging to Stein's dictatorial office. In this Department the scheme is reported on by Schön and Altenstein, their attention being directed to particular points by Stein himself. Stein's Department and Schrötter's Department now correspond with each other on the subject of the debatable points. The measure next enters upon another stage. It is laid before the General Conference. This was a provisional form, which Stein had brought into existence after his return from Berlin, of that Council of State which, as we have seen, was intended to be the keystone of his reformed administration. It has

now taken the form of a law for the whole Monarchy, and in this shape, on October 19th, it received the approval of the General Conference. On Nov. 9th it was laid before the King by Stein and Schrötter, and on Nov. 19th it received his sanction. The King says :

My dear Ministers of State Baron v. Schrötter and Baron vom Stein.

The wish of the citizens of this town for a legal representation and for a share in the municipal commonwealth is no doubt universal. Both too will animate civic patriotism and public spirit. I have gladly therefore ratified at the same time for all the towns of my Monarchy the Municipal Organisation (Städteordnung) which was laid before me by you on the 9th instant, and which is herewith returned to you; and I have not found it necessary on that account to make further inquiries; at the same time I consent that the execution take place, and that a commencement of it be made at once in the great towns, and that it be thereafter continued. You, Minister of State Baron v. Schrötter for the Kingdom of Prussia, and you, Minister of State Baron vom Stein by means of the Immediate Commission at Berlin for the other provinces, will arrange what is necessary for the publication, which is immediately to be taken in hand.

I have given the King's exact words, because his manner of addressing the two Ministers gives us a curious glimpse of that old Administration of Prussia which was on the point of disappearing.

The law consists of 208 sections, and cannot here be given in full. But perhaps the reader will allow me, in the summary I shall give, to preserve something of the form of the original document.

TITLE I.

Of the supreme oversight of the State over the Towns.

§§ 1—2. This remains, so far as it is not expressly renounced in this law. It is exercised by inspecting accounts of the man-

agement of Town property, by hearing complaints, by ratifying new statutes and sanctioning appointments.

TITLE II.

Of the Towns in general.

§§ 3—13. The distinction between mediate and immediate Towns is abolished; the Lord of the Manor (Gutsherr) cannot henceforth exercise any right contrary to this law. Towns are to be divided into three classes, Great Towns (population above 10,000, exclusive of Military), Middle Towns (population above 3500), Small Towns (all the rest). Every town containing more than 800 souls is to be divided into wards (Bezirke). A Magistracy is to preside over the whole town, a Ward President (Bezirksvorsteher) over each ward. The inhabitants fall into the two classes of Citizens and Residents.

TITLE III.

Of the Citizens and of the Right of Citizenship.

§§ 14—39. Those are citizens who are competent to pursue city occupations, and to own land within the limits of the City Police. There is but one kind of citizenship, and existing distinctions of greater and lesser citizens are hereby abolished. Citizenship is not to be refused to those qualified if they are of blameless life, and unmarried women may acquire it. But Cantonists, Soldiers, Minors and Jews, as well as Mennonites, remain subject to their present restrictions. And certain crimes disqualify for citizenship.

Those who are qualified are also obliged to become citizens. Citizens are bound to pay rates, to serve town offices, and in case of need to render any other service. No exemptions are allowed, and all existing exemptions are abolished. But substitutes are allowed where personal service is not expressly required, and in the case of state-officials whose time is preoccupied.

Citizenship is forfeited after two years by ceasing to reside in the Town and omitting to furnish a substitute, also by certain crimes.

TITLE IV.

Of the Residents.

§§ 40—45. Such are all inhabitants of a Town that are not Citizens. They are subject like the Citizens to the Town Magistracy and Police, and are bound to contribute in proper proportion, in extreme need even by personal service, to the wants of the Town, but are without the franchise active or passive, and may not pursue those occupations which are confined to the Citizens.

TITLE V.

Of the Collective Body of Citizens.

§§ 46—68. All the Citizens compose the Collective Body. It elects an Executive (Magistrat) and also a Representative Body (Verordnete). Besides this it does nothing. But by its representatives it oversees the administration of the corporate property, and that of Classes and Corporations within the township (except where they have administrators of their own), and that of Institutes and Foundations. It levies contributions from the inhabitants to meet charges that cannot be met out of the corporate income. In the assessment it must not oppress individuals by majority of votes, nor grant any new exemptions; exemptions already existing may be bought up. New members must contribute to preexisting public debts. Members may resign their citizenship, giving due notice; only not so as to get the advantages without bearing the burdens of citizenship. Members acting counter to the common object may be ejected in certain circumstances (to be defined below). The ejection must take place with the proper formalities, but there is no appeal from it except on the ground that the township has exceeded its powers.

TITLE VI.

Of the Civic Representatives.

§§ 69—139. Part I. Of the mode of electing and changing the Representatives.

Such representatives must exist in every Town belonging to three classes. In Small Towns the number of them must be

from 24 to 36; in Middle Towns from 36 to 60; in Great Towns from 60 to 100, and Substitutes to fill casual vacancies are also to be elected to the number of a third of the number of Representatives. The election is to be by wards, and to each ward is to be assigned a certain number of Representatives. No account is taken of membership in any guild. Deprived of the vote are (1) Members of the Executive during their term of office, (2) Citizens of the female sex, (3) Non-resident Citizens whose income is below 200 thalers in Great or 150 thalers in Middle and Small Towns. Each elector is bound to appear at the election held in his ward, and may be struck off the list for repeated non-appearance. Every elector is also eligible, but only in the same district, and no one else is eligible. Two-thirds of the Representatives must be resident householders. The Representatives are to be elected for three years, a third part vacating their seats yearly.

Part II. Of the Rights and Position of the Representatives.

They have an unlimited power of representing the Community, but their particular function is to assess and sanction rates and to regulate burdens and services, and this function they perform without referring to the Community for instructions. *The law and their election are their full powers, their conviction and their view of the public good are their instructions, and their conscience is the authority (Behörde) before which they are to give account of their conduct.* They are in the fullest sense representatives of the whole body of Citizens, and therefore not representatives of the single district which has elected them, nor of any Corporation or Guild to which they may accidentally belong. They are to receive no pay or gratifications. Their number must be kept always complete through the election of a certain number of substitutes who are to be held ready to fill up vacancies. The meetings are to be monthly, two thirds being a *quorum*, and the decision being by absolute majority. Their decisions bind all the inhabitants, but can be carried into effect only by the Magistrates.

TITLE VII.

§§ 140—164. Of the Magistracies and Ward Superintendents.

There shall be only one Magistracy for the whole police district of each town. All separate Magistracies, such as those

allowed to the French colonies, are abolished. The Magistracy shall consist solely of Members of the Township who possess its confidence. Every citizen who is animated by public spirit will gladly undertake so honourable an office even without the prospect of any personal profit. Pay shall only be given to those members who sacrifice their whole time.

It shall consist of a paid Burgomaster (in the Great Towns Superior Burgomaster), paid Councillors and unpaid Councillors. The paid Councillors shall vary in number with the different classes of Towns; in the Small Towns there shall be but one. The unpaid Councillors shall be from 12—15 in Great Towns, from 7—12 in Middle Towns, from 4—6 in Small Towns. Most of the Councillors hold office for six years, but some, chosen for special knowledge, hold office for twelve, and the unpaid Councillors may, on giving notice, retire after three years.

Except the Superior Burgomaster all are to be elected by the Representatives and confirmed by the Superintending Police of the Province. The Superior Burgomaster is chosen by the King out of three named by the Representatives.

The Ward Superintendent must be a householder of the Ward. He is chosen by the Representatives for six years, but may retire at the end of three. He is unpaid.

TITLE VIII.

§§ 165—190. Of the Regulation of Business and the Relation of the Official Bodies to each other.

The State may either set up Police Magistrates of its own in a district, or it may commission the Local Magistracy to perform the same duties. In the latter case the Local Magistracy becomes to that extent subject to the Central Government. The expense of police falls on the district, but it is for the Government to raise the fund and to provide the machinery. The conduct of business must centre in the Magistracy, but an effective cooperation is allowed to the citizens. An initiative in local legislation is allowed to the representatives, but any proposal to alter existing laws or arrangements must receive the sanction of the Provincial Police Department.

Local affairs shall be conducted partly by the Magistracy, partly by Deputations and Commissions, composed principally of

Representatives and other Citizens chosen by the Representatives, and confirmed by the Magistracy, and of one or two Members of the Magistracy.

Affairs conducted by the Magistracy alone are—the superintendence of elections ; the generalia of the administration ; the examination of grievances ; registration ; affairs of trade, navigation, and manufacture ; public accounts ; general control. Affairs conducted by Deputations are ecclesiastical and educational affairs, the care of the poor, insurance, sanitation, public buildings, the charge of the common purse, weights and measures, prisons, &c.

The Ward Superintendent has the charge of streets, bridges, fountains, conduits, &c.

The Town Revenue falls under three heads : (1) Wants of the Community, (2) Cost of Police, (3) Cost of Justice. The two latter are settled by the State and cannot be refused by the Town, but the first may be reduced by the Representatives.

TITLE IX.

§§ 191—208. Of the Obligations of the Citizens to accept public Municipal offices, and of the deprivation and suspension of such offices.

Every citizen is bound to serve even in unpaid offices, but these must be limited in time. Six years shall be the general term, but there shall be permission to retire at the end of three. The only grounds of exemption are illness, a long journey, or the simultaneous serving of three offices. But State Officials, Clerks, Professors, Schoolmasters, and practising Physicians may refuse to serve. By persistent refusal to serve, a citizen incurs the forfeiture of his citizenship, and at the same time becomes subject to increased burdens.

Such is the law by which a beginning of liberty was made in Prussia. Two features in it especially deserve notice. In the first place, it is not the result of a struggle between the Government and the people, or in any sense a concession on the part of the Government. In popular oratory liberty is al-

ways represented as the prize of a contest as though in every nation capable of greatness patriots arose to battle with the Government and after an obstinate strife 'bequeathed by bleeding sire to son,' the Government being overwhelmed, a golden age began for the nation. Nothing similar is seen in Prussia. There is no opposition of any kind to the Government, and when liberty is introduced the whole process, from the first suggestion to the execution, is conducted exclusively by Government officials. The motive throughout is that which alone disposes Stein himself to favour liberty, not any fear of the oppressiveness of government, not any pity for the condition of a population subjected to despotic rule, but on the contrary a pity for the Government, a feeling that it is not fair in the people to wash their hands altogether of public matters and to discharge the whole burden upon their rulers. And the character of the law corresponds to the motive of it. It carries an air of stern command. The people are not allowed, but commanded, to govern themselves. Much stress is laid upon the burdensomeness of the new regulations, but it is firmly asserted that the burden is one which the people have no right to evade. The citizens must not refuse the offices which their fellow-citizens lay upon them, nor must they expect pay unless the office is such as demands their whole time. There is, indeed, something in the law which reminds us of the great principle of military reorganisation which Scharnhorst was meditating at the very same time. As the military reform ended in the State taking possession of three whole years in life of every citizen, and partial possession of

four more, so does this law enact that a citizen may be called upon to serve his town gratuitously for three years, and, as a general rule, that he may be expected to serve for six.

As we have seen, the law proved in the main decidedly successful. But it was not successful in every point; and in the last years of Stein's life there grew up a strong demand for alterations in it. In those years the Estates of the different Provinces had been recalled to activity; and in 1825 the Estates of Brandenburg petitioned for a revision of the Town Ordinance; and in 1828 F. v. Raumer published the criticism of it which has been cited above. His objections are of the following kind.

It is not satisfactory that the qualification for citizenship should be either the possession of land or the pursuit of a town trade. Personal property should be regarded. At present the richest man who has not happened to buy land is excluded, while any one who has bought an old hut for ten thalers is a citizen. As for pursuing a town trade, this only means being entered on the lists of a trade and proves nothing in a man's favour; he may be a beggar and without occupation. The elections of Representatives, particularly in small towns, have not worked well; the number of Representatives ought to be diminished and measures taken to raise their character.

So too of the Magistracies. The Burgomaster should perhaps be chosen for twelve years instead of six, and should receive a retiring pension. The provision that the Ward Superintendent must be a householder in the ward should be repealed.

He then proceeds to argue in favour of Trade Guilds and betrays here that the opposition to the Law arose in part from Conservative feeling.

In the main the objections urged seem to have been (1) that the rights of the Government were too much abridged, (2) that the Law created too much uniformity in the different towns, (3) that it allowed uneducated people to make their way both into the Magistracies and into the Assemblies of Representatives, (4) that the Magistracies were too much dependent on popular favour, (5) that quarrels arose between the Magistracies and the Representative Assemblies.

A revised law was at length passed in 1831, the year of Stein's death. It relaxed considerably the strictness of the definition of citizenship, and in particular it allowed personal property to constitute a qualification. It diminished the necessary number of Representatives. It restored *permissively* the old classification of the citizens by guilds and corporations. It repealed the provision that every elector is also eligible, requiring a higher money qualification for eligibility. It created a machinery for reconciling the Magistracy and the Representatives in case of difference of opinion, making the central government the ultimate arbiter when reconciliation proved impossible. It required the consent of Government to many decisions, which under the old law were competent to the Local Body independently. It created more diversity than before by requiring a special Statute to be passed for each
whereas the old law had only permitted this,
the draught of the Statute to be sent in

within three months, which term being found too short, few such Statutes were passed. On the whole, as the reader will see, the revised Law was what Liberalism would call reactionary, since the innovations were in favour either of Government or of the wealthier classes or of the old organisation of guilds.

It is to be observed in conclusion that Stein's law could of necessity only apply to those Provinces of the present Prussia which belonged to the Monarchy in 1808. On the other hand, the revised Law of 1831 was not forced upon all the towns which had hitherto lived under Stein's. Again, in the Rhine Province, which was added to Prussia at the general Peace, the French local organisation ultimately prevailed. This motley state of things was again altered in the period of reorganisation which followed 1848. The Law of Stein is not, I think, at the present moment anywhere in force, but the principles introduced into Prussia by it are in force everywhere.

CHAPTER IV.

STEIN'S RETIREMENT.

It was shown above how the ratification by the King of the new treaty with France almost of necessity involved the retirement of Stein, since it committed the country to a foreign policy which was to him intolerable, and since it united the King with the party adverse to him. At the same time we saw him exposed to the vengeance of Napoleon through the intercepted letter. We are now to tell the story of his fall, and show from which of the many enemies by whom he was beset the blow came.

On this point there has been much dispute, as was to be expected. When a man falls in the midst of a crowd of enemies, it is generally a matter of doubt who brought him down, and the difficulty of deciding becomes greater when the wound is not a bodily one, which can be seen and examined, but only a shock given to the feeling of confidence in him entertained by another man. It would not be surprising if we discovered that the influence by which Frederick William was determined to part

with Stein was necessarily unknown and unknowable to all but Frederick William himself, if not even to him. Nevertheless, of the different accounts which have been given, one does seem much more probable than the others.

Had Napoleon demanded the immediate dismissal of Stein or launched an edict of proscription against him at the time when the intercepted letter appeared in the *Moniteur*, which was on September 8th, the reason of his dismissal would never have become a matter of dispute. But he was allowed to remain Minister for more than two months longer, and when the King at last accepted his resignation he made indeed a profession that he did so unwillingly and under pressure, but was not able to point to any peremptory decree received from Paris. After this nearly another month passed before Napoleon issued his decree of proscription against the fallen Minister, which is dated December 16th. Upon this long delay on the part of Napoleon has been founded the conjecture that he had himself no strong feeling of hostility to Stein, and would have let him alone as soon as he had derived the utmost political advantage from his indiscreet letter, but that the opposition in Berlin made Napoleon their instrument, and also that the King himself sympathised to some extent with the Opposition and had no objection to escape from the yoke of an imperious Minister at whose feet he had been compelled to humble himself. Such a theory will explain the dismissal with a good deal of plausibility, for it may be asked, if Napoleon was determined that Stein should retire, why he did not

say so, and why he at least allowed the King to defer the dismissal so long. It is true that it leaves the Decree of Proscription unexplained, and compels us to imagine a somewhat capricious outbreak of tyrannical humour in Napoleon, who without any particularly strong feeling against Stein could single him out for such an outrageous and unprecedented attack.

There is no question of the fact that the Berlin Opposition did raise a clamour against Stein that might very well have made the French suspicious of him, if they had not been so before. It is also true that the delay on the part of Napoleon, who had promised to be as quick as lightning and who in such cases was commonly as good as his word, did require explanation, and might naturally lead such observers as Daru and Stein's niece, the Countess Senfft, to think that his anger was feigned, and might tempt the Frau vom Stein and Sack to say later, that at any rate if Napoleon wished Stein to retire it was open to him to say so, and till he did so there was no need to assume it. But on the other hand his delay seems capable of quite a different explanation, and there is reason to think that Napoleon was in reality resolved from the beginning not only to expel Stein from the Ministry but to proscribe him, so that the Berlin clamour, real and noisy as it was, had in fact no influence upon the result.

The principal proof of this is to be found in a letter written by Napoleon to Soult on September 10th, that is only two days after the appearance of the intercepted letter. It runs as follows :

Vous verrez dans les journaux de quelle manière on parle de la lettre de M. Stein. J'ai demandé qu'il fût chassé du Ministère, sans quoi le roi de Prusse ne rentrera pas chez lui. De plus j'ai fait mettre le sequestre sur ses biens en Westphalie¹.

This passage seems sufficiently to show that, so far from being feigned to intimidate the negotiators, Napoleon's feeling towards Stein was even more bitter than he avowed at the moment, and that the Decree of Proscription was no sudden freak of tyranny, but had been deliberately resolved on from the beginning and was steadfastly kept in mind for months until the moment for issuing it seemed to have arrived. The exact correspondence of what was actually done with what is here announced as Napoleon's intention ought to warn us against supposing that his actions were determined by such contemptible influences as the clamour of his own flatterers at Berlin; and on the other hand to be surprised that he was so tardy in execution is to take much too seriously that *rôle* of Omnipotent Jove which it suited him to play. The position of Napoleon at that time was very difficult and embarrassed; as we have observed above, a spark of courage in the King of Prussia might have betrayed this in a mortifying manner; and in these circumstances it is rather surprising how much Napoleon was able to exact from Prussia than that he was not able to exact more.

The treaty now forced by him upon Prussia contained, as the 4th secret article, the stipulation that all Prussian officials who were natives of the

¹ Nap. Corr. xvi. 503.

provinces ceded by Prussia at the Treaty of Tilsit should be dismissed. This stipulation did not actually touch Stein, who was not a native of any Prussian province, but it was evidently intended to do so, for Stein had passed a great part of his life in Westphalia and Napoleon's letter just quoted speaks of his property in Westphalia, and it was so understood by Stein himself, who points out the mistake in a letter to the Czar. This studied and formal attack upon the Minister does not countenance the supposition that there was no strong hostility against him, and perhaps at the same time it shows that Napoleon did not consider the King so dependent on himself as to have no will of his own, for had it been so, the mere expression of a wish would have been enough without an article in a treaty. In matters of the first importance we have found Frederick William disposed to unbounded concession, but, perhaps as an atonement to his own conscience, he was in smaller matters an obstinate man. He had been obstinate about Beyme; he had lately given Napoleon a refusal about the Confederation of the Rhine: if he should do so again in the matter of Stein, the effect might be embarrassing. That he would have to yield in the end might be certain, but Napoleon was not strong enough to compel his submission at any moment.

Yet his threats and those of his followers were ~~not spared~~ and did not cease when Prince Wilhelm and Brockhausen at Paris had been cowed into ~~ignoring~~ the Treaty. When Golz passed through ~~him~~ on his way to Erfurt he found the principal

French officers and diplomatists, Davoust, Daru, Bignon, violent in their denunciations of the plot of which Stein had been discovered to be the ringleader. At Erfurt he heard just the same language. Champagny declared that Stein could not possibly remain in office, however indispensable his talents might be to the King. Napoleon demanded how Stein could dare to utter such things with impunity, and gave Golz the impression that he was only restrained from violence by consideration for Alexander. If all this did not at the time convince observers that the persecution of Stein was earnestly meant, this was only because they had not, as we have, the means of contemplating the whole of it together. While the negotiations were in progress, these attacks served a political purpose ; they were used by Napoleon as a means of intimidating the Prussian diplomatists ; and therefore at the moment it was a plausible supposition that there was no serious feeling at the bottom of them. But neither the beginning nor the end of these attacks was visible to those who made this supposition. They did not know that Napoleon had already written to Soult that he intended not only to expel Stein but also to confiscate his property, and they had not seen him deliberately execute this intention at a time when no political object was to be gained by it. Read by the light of the event, the language held by Napoleon and Champagny about Stein at Erfurt seems to have expressed their real feelings none the less because it suited their immediate interests at the same time.

Another circumstance at the moment created an equally groundless doubt of Napoleon's earnestness. Though he repeated and his underlings repeated that Stein must go, yet their language, emphatic as it was, was not quite in the unmistakable tone which Napoleon adopted when he expected his commands to be obeyed. If he had been serious would he not, it was thought, have refused to negotiate or threatened an instant renewal of war unless Stein was dismissed? Since he did not do this, was it not evident that his anger was partly simulated?

This difficulty also was removed in the sequel. It was shown clearly that Napoleon was earnest enough in the matter to proceed to any extremity. When the Decree of Proscription came the French Ambassador caused Stein to be informed that he had instructions to break off all relations with Prussia and to leave Berlin if Stein continued either in Prussia or in the Prussian service. And this was at a time when it was impossible for him to thwart Napoleon half so effectively as he could have done while he continued Minister. But, as I have said, we must not allow ourselves to suppose that Napoleon because his power was great was at all moments in a condition to gratify all his passions without restraint. He was still under the necessity of sometimes dissembling, of sometimes waiting. And it has already been pointed out that at this particular moment, though he played with such remarkable spirit the part of Universal Monarch at Erfurt, he was really in a very anxious crisis of his career and had suffered the greatest failure that had yet befallen him. What it cost him most art to

conceal at Erfurt was that the first place in the duumvirate belonged to Alexander rather than to himself. In his Spanish disaster he had fled to Alexander to receive from him fresh prestige, a sort of confirmation in his empire, and though he was able to offer in return that which the Czar was delighted to receive, still it may be said that he had more need of Alexander than Alexander of him. He was very far therefore from being in a condition to dictate his arbitrary will at Erfurt. And this least of all in matters which concerned Prussia, for Prussia of course was of all foreign States that in whose welfare the Czar was most closely interested.

Napoleon had no reason, it is true, to suppose that the Czar took any interest in Stein. The two men had no doubt just made each other's acquaintance, and Alexander may have already received that impression which caused him, four years later, in the moment of his own extreme need, to send for Stein. But he was not likely to interfere purely on Stein's account; the question was whether he would not interfere to protect the King. It was well known that there had been a sort of romantic brotherhood between the two young Northern Monarchs, and Napoleon had contrived to gratify Alexander's feeling of patronage and his own malignant contempt at the same time by declaring in the Treaty of Tilsit that the King of Prussia was restored to his dominions out of Napoleon's regard for the Czar. Alexander, though he had not objected to take a part of his friend's territory, had accepted seriously the position of patron. He had interceded for a reduction of the indemnity; he now went to Erfurt

intending to intercede again, and took Berlin on his way. It is true that he went with his mind made up to betray Europe including Prussia in return for what was offered him in Turkey, but he might be all the more solicitous on that account to protect his friend from anything in the nature of a slight.

We have already seen that Frederick William had accepted the position of protégé as seriously as Alexander that of patron. His foreign system at this time seems to have consisted in appealing to Russia against France. Thus he had told Stein and Scharnhorst that nothing could be done in the way of insurrection but with the permission of Russia. We shall find him now looking for help to Russia before he consents to part with Stein. For it appears that to part with Stein did really cost him a struggle and that he began by refusing to do so. On September 21st, the day of the arrival of the bad news from Paris, he wrote declaring the terms now imposed inadmissible and in particular insisting on the necessity of keeping Stein. He continued to cling to him for some time longer, and even after Stein had a second time pressed for his dismissal.

There is surely to be found in all these circumstances a sufficient explanation of the slight degree of forbearance which Napoleon showed. He stopped short of absolute coercion because the King declared Stein to be necessary to him, and because Alexander, who could not just at that moment be thwarted in such a manner, might be disposed to support the King. For these reasons he judged it necessary—not for a moment to give up his purpose, not for a moment to abate his haughty and menacing language,

not even to hint that Stein's offence might be overlooked, but to allow a little delay and suffer the dismissal of Stein to take place in a manner not quite intolerable to the King's pride and therefore not likely to provoke the interference of Alexander. But his anger against Stein, so far from being, as was conjectured at the time, simulated, was actually dissimulated. We may conjecture what he would have done but for Alexander by what he actually did a month after. Then he proceeded to the last extremity, and it is not even certain that Stein's life was not his object. Why this difference? In the first place the King was not so much bound to resent the proscription of a private citizen as the proscription of his own Prime Minister. But we should also remark that the Decree of Proscription is dated Madrid. It was the rising in Spain that had made Napoleon for the time feel himself dependent upon Alexander. Without Russian help he could not hold down Germany while he poured his troops into Spain. But he doubtless considered the embarrassment momentary, for he had no doubt that the Spanish rising would subside in a moment at his approach. Everything had now turned out as he wished. Alexander had taken his bribe, by his help the new treaty had been forced on Prussia, the invasion of Spain had taken place, and he himself was in Madrid. The dangerous cape seemed to be doubled, and he had no further occasion to disquiet himself about Alexander. He therefore issues the Decree of Proscription at once.

But in the meanwhile not only observers but the parties most interested supposed Napoleon's anger

to be less than it was, and to be partly feigned for diplomatic purposes. The King and Stein did not for some time convince themselves that what had happened would altogether sunder them. We have seen that the King refused on September 21st to accept Stein's resignation. But as the facts were not made public it was open to all who disliked Stein to believe the exact contrary, viz. that he had refused to allow himself to be dismissed. Thus for instance writes Marwitz :

In our weakness, and as we could not go to war for him, he could not stay in office. The King and every one expected that he would wish for his dismissal, but this was not so. The King gave him to understand that he had better go, but he insisted instead that the King should keep him in defiance of Napoleon, and through the King's irresoluteness the matter dragged on for two months.

And then after mentioning the poem above inserted, which appeared in the Königsberger Zeitung on October 27th, as one of the contrivances of the Stein party to induce the King to keep him, he makes the following reflexion :

What folly it showed publicly to exhort the King for his safety in danger to keep the Minister whom the despot Napoleon had already declared an outlaw !

In the midst of so much brisk invective delivered with such an air of superior knowledge of affairs, it is startling to come upon blunders which show old Marwitz to misconceive not merely the details but the main outlines of the history. Assuredly it never occurred to any one to commit such a folly. Napoleon did not declare Stein

an outlaw till a month after the question of his retention in office had been set at rest, and when Napoleon had done so neither Stein nor any of his friends doubted for a moment that the proper course for him was to escape at once beyond the frontier.

If these statements of the Opposition have any foundation at all, they must be misrepresentations of the fact that Stein for some time thought it possible to resign his office without altogether separating himself from the King. Certainly he was not only ready but eager to lay down his office, and indeed had pressed upon the King, even before the affair of the letter, the necessity of a change of Ministers unless the insurrection policy were adopted. On the morning of the arrival of the *Moniteur* he offered his formal resignation. A letter came from Golz at Erfurt, dated October 9th, advising the King to devote himself unreservedly to France, and Stein himself to resign his office, settle his property on his wife or one of his children, and then live in the neighbourhood of the Court and continue to give his advice on financial questions. On October 18th Stein laid this letter before the King, accompanied with the following remarks :

Probably the Emperor Napoleon will be too much occupied with the Spanish war to trouble himself with me, and he will be satisfied if your Majesty deprives me of the position of confidence with which you have honoured me.

As this is now to take place, your Majesty will allow me,

(1) To lay before you the plan of Administration which, altered and adapted to suit the present state of public business, would be carried into effect at the moment of the evacuation of the country ;

(2) To propose to you the nomination of the persons upon whom my official functions would devolve: in the choice of them I proceed on the principle that your Majesty wishes to restore the Monarchy on the principle hitherto adopted of respect for liberty of person and property, and to give a constitution summoning all intelligence and will to the help of the Government.

In this new administrative organisation I might find a place which without putting me forward would afford me the means of being still useful.

Count Golz speaks of unreserved devotion to France—I wish the example of the Powers which have followed this system, Holland, Spain, Sardinia, Etruria, were more reassuring.

The King gave what seems to have been his usual answer at this time, namely that he must wait before deciding for the return of the Czar. When Alexander came, he recommended, like Golz, ‘entire devotion to France,’ and in a private audience with Stein advised him that he might probably be able to retain his financial influence because Napoleon considered him as likely to succeed better than other financiers in raising the war contribution.

This fancy, like so many other fancies of the kind, was dissipated soon after by the Decree of Proscription. Had it been otherwise, are we to suppose that Stein was eager to be used by Napoleon as a leech or cupping instrument to draw out the life-blood of his country? We have seen Stein at the beginning of the year active in raising money for Napoleon, but this was in order to get rid of him. It was surely innocent in Alexander to suppose that he would show the same activity, or that Napoleon would expect him to show the same activity, in raising money now that he was perfectly satisfied that the exaction would never

have an end. Nevertheless he was ready, if Napoleon would allow him, to continue to render what help he could to the King. On October 28th he explained in what way he was prepared to do so. He proposed that the new Council of State should now be constituted, and that he should take his place in it as a Privy Councillor without department. In this way it is certainly conceivable that he might have continued to exert the influence of a Prime Minister; he declares that he prefers it greatly to an ostensible complete retirement with retention of a secret influence, and in fact declines formally to accept this latter position. We seem to see here, as in the affair of the letter, a characteristic intolerance or incapacity of secrecy. The show of a complete retirement would seem to have been absolutely necessary to satisfy Napoleon, and it is not possible to imagine him appeased by the mere retirement of his enemy into a Council of State where he might still be, if the King chose it, omnipotent.

The view we have been led to take is that it had been from the time of the discovery of the letter, and continued always to be, Napoleon's intention that Stein should leave his office, and that sooner or later he would have intervened, if necessary, to expel him. But he may be supposed to have calculated that without any direct intervention of his, the King's knowledge that Stein was disagreeable to him and the King's sense of the urgent necessity of being on good terms with him, would lead to the dismissal of Stein. Now that Alexander was gone again, and the King became aware how completely he had com-

mitted himself to a policy which was not that of Stein, and Stein had a second time offered his resignation, the connexion between King and Minister began to loosen as of itself, and it began to be treated as an understood thing that Stein's Ministry was to be wound up. The King had clung to the notion that he could resist Napoleon with the help of Alexander, but Alexander had given him to understand that this time he meant to go with Napoleon. We can follow with some distinctness the process by which the King drifted into new connexions and found himself, almost before he knew it, estranged from Stein. First comes an invitation from the Czar to St Petersburg. We may imagine how gladly poor Queen Louise would emerge from the long eclipse of royalty and feel herself again both a Queen and a beauty in Russian drawing-rooms. And yet to accept such an invitation was an ominous step. Alexander just then was almost as real an enemy as Napoleon; those who saw Frederick William accepting Russian hospitalities might expect to see him next in company with Dalberg or King Jerome at the Tuileries and inscribed in the infamous roll of the Confederation of the Rhine. Stein reported against the journey to St Petersburg; it was not right, he said, just then to spend so much money; and the King could not help agreeing with him. But the poor Queen could not put up with the disappointment. A certain Nagler was found to respond to her feelings. He was brother-in-law to Altenstein, and Altenstein had looked up to Hardenberg as his patron. Thus as Stein's ascendancy waned, the

party of Hardenberg began to separate itself again and form a distinct group among those who for a time had known no differences in the enthusiasm of reform. It began to be the word at court, that Stein was a good Minister for the people but not for the King.

The state of the King's mind early in November may be pretty clearly gathered from the following incident. We have seen how, as reform followed reform, the desire formed itself and grew to gather up the principal points of the new system into a kind of solemn symbol or confession of political faith which should at the same time make known to the whole people what Government had been doing for them and pledge the Government itself to continue in the course on which it had entered. On the 26th of September Stein had laid before the King for publication an enumeration of reforms made and contemplated. The King had sanctioned the publication with the words, 'The article seems to me very properly drawn,' and it had been sent both to the Königsberger and to the Hamburger Zeitung. The substance of it had appeared in French in the *Moniteur* of October 15th. It was now proposed to give this article the form of a royal Proclamation and issue it in such a way that it should be certain to become known to the whole country. In this form it was laid before the King about the beginning of October, that is, at the moment when he decisively rejected the insurrection policy of Stein. He now made some objections, but when it was presented to him again on November 6th, having received the alterations he had

demanded, he sent a refusal to sign it in the following terms :

I have thought myself still obliged, for reasons known to you, to refrain from ratifying the altered Proclamation which was laid before me yesterday. You know, and it cannot have remained doubtful to you, how much I have at heart your retention in the Ministry : yet I cannot shut out the thought that many hindrances will still probably be thrown in the way of this, and that in any case it will be advisable to wait for the return of Count Golz before allowing my definitive resolutions on this and so many other important subjects to come before the public. To confess this to you frankly was the object of these lines.

Königsberg, Nov. 7th, 1808.

FRIEDRICH WILHELM.

It is easy to read the King's thoughts in this letter. He has evidently ceased to regard Stein as his Minister, though thinking of him with good will and individually still disposed to keep him. He seems indeed to be preparing himself not merely for a new adviser, but for such a change of measures as an English King accepts when the Whigs go out and the Tories come in ; for his reason for refusing to sign the Proclamation seems to be that it contains a statement of Stein's political principles.

Stein, as might be expected, sent in a new petition for his dismissal on the same day. He begins by remarking that the Proclamation contains merely a recognition of certain principles of administration and government, the soundness of which is independent of his personal participation in public affairs, and that in his absence men will always be found to carry them out. He proceeds to say that the arrival of Count Golz can in his

opinion decide nothing, since 'the views of that person, who is good-natured but subject to all sorts of overwhelming influence, are well known,—he counsels with heart and mouth unbounded compliance, and his courage will not have been strengthened by his crossing the Weichsel.' His decision is that the anxieties arising out of his retention can only be removed by his dismissal, which is to him desirable because many minds probably are disquieted by his continuance in the Administration, because it may perhaps serve as a pretext to justify violences leading to a deplorable future, and because it seems to him that after the return to Berlin the struggle of weak and common views with the better cause will begin with more violence and persistency.

The King's reply to this says nothing about the petition for dismissal, and merely repeats that nothing can be settled till the arrival of Count Golz.

We see then that as early as November 7th, the King's mind is practically made up to dismiss Stein, and every day that passed over him helped to dissipate what remained of his indecision. That Napoleon meant Stein to retire could hardly be doubtful. If he himself under the pressure of greater affairs had allowed the matter to escape him, Stein had plenty of enemies who would remind him of it. But surely it would be a great mistake to suppose that Napoleon regarded Stein and his plans of insurrection with contempt. If Germany should actually explode as Spain had done it would be scarcely possible for Napoleon to maintain his former ascendancy. He knew what a spirit was rising in Austria, and Stein's letter informed him of

discontents in Westphalia. If the German character might want the fire of the Spanish, who could say how far this deficiency might be compensated by energetic leaders? There was every reason for regarding Stein as capable of proving such a leader, and we may boldly say that his expulsion from North Germany was not a measure of extreme circumspection but an urgently necessary measure for Napoleon, if he would not have North Germany as well as Austria on his hands in the next spring. Indeed the notion that after he left Erfurt he ceased to think of Stein until in December again something reminded him of him, when he indulged his tyrannical malice by launching the Decree of Proscription, is sufficiently disproved by the following sentence in the 3rd Bulletin written on November 13th, after the taking of Burgos :

Il faudrait que les hommes comme M. de Stein qui à défaut des troupes de ligne qui n'ont pu résister à nos aigles méditent le sublime projet de lever les masses, fussent témoins des malheurs qu'elles entraînent et du peu d'obstacles que cette ressource peut offrir à des troupes réglées.

The course taken by the French at Berlin in the month of November was precisely such as would be taken if Napoleon had given the word to drive the Minister from office by unceasing agitation. The clamour which he himself and Champagny had begun was now pertinaciously continued by Davoust, Daru, and Bignon. As a matter of course, the Prussian Opposition, whose headquarters were also at Berlin, swelled the chorus, and it was not unnatural that some of the friends of Stein should declare that these were his real

enemies, and that but for their indefatigable virulence, the French would have allowed his offence to be buried in oblivion. We can easily believe that they did what they could, but Stein was really so dangerous, and it was so essential to the French, at the moment when their army evacuated Prussia, when the Prussian nation seemed to raise its head again, and Schill himself was on the point of entering Berlin in a kind of triumph, to snatch from them a leader who might speedily have kindled all Germany; moreover Napoleon's utterances show him to have been so well aware of this, that we must think the conclusion to which the Opposition so zealously urged the French was really foregone.

Nor is it to be perceived that the Davousts and Darus waited for the persuasion of their Prussian partisans, or showed themselves in any way to need the spur of their exhortations. On the contrary they professed to act according to Napoleon's instructions and they predicted early in November the proscription of Stein which followed¹. The importance of the clamour they raised and of the counter-clamour with which Stein's friends met it, is none the less on that account, but it is of a different kind. Not only did newspapers take up the debate and open themselves to party rhetoric and political verses, as if the country had been England, but petitions against Stein's dismissal were sent round in Königsberg and the neighbourhood and largely signed by officials, proprietors and citizens, while a protest

¹ Pertz, II. 279.

against the petition was sent round by the other side, which however only found seven signatures. If it is unreasonable to suppose that this agitation determined the result which was determined beforehand by the will of Napoleon, yet it may remind us of the contention of the Petitioners and the Abhorrrers in our own history, and has proved like that the commencement of a great party-division.

Meanwhile the French leaders at Berlin established a sort of reign of terror. Under pretence of tracking the plot which Stein's letter unfortunately gave them some pretext for assuming to exist, many acts of violence were done and many arbitrary arrests took place. The persons who fell under suspicion were often such as deserved it least, for the French had little knowledge of Prussian society and were reduced to follow the most accidental clues. H. v. Troschke, above mentioned as co-proprietor with Stein of the estate of Birnbaum, was seized, threatened with military execution, and his papers taken from him in the vague hope of finding something that would criminate Stein. It was natural also to suspect Prince Wittgenstein, though, as far as appears, only Stein's reckless communicativeness could have given him momentarily the character of a patriot. An outrageous fable was circulated, implicating him along with a great court lady, the Countess Voss, in a plot to murder Napoleon. The lady in question held the office of Oberhofmeisterin. She was now eighty years of age, and half a century before had been driven into a marriage only half happy

by the persecuting addresses of the King's grandfather, Frederick the Great's unfortunate brother August Wilhelm. Her father had been present at Malplaquet and she herself lived to see the Battle of Leipzig. She was now the centre of the Court almost more than Queen Louise herself, to whom she stood in a kind of maternal relation. Her diary, extending over 54 years of court life, has lately been published. It shows her to have been intimate with Prince Wittgenstein, to whom also a court-atmosphere was natural. In the note which she makes of the intercepted letter she remarks with satisfaction that Wittgenstein is not compromised by it. The story which was now circulated represented her as having written a letter to Wittgenstein at Hamburg to secure his assistance in a scheme for administering poison to Napoleon at Bayonne. Such was her animosity, it was said, against the oppressor from whom her royal mistress had suffered so much, that her very parrot was taught to repeat opprobrious speeches against him. It is curious that her diary is completely silent about all these stories, which must have given the old lady much annoyance at this time, and about the persecution to which her friend was subjected. For the Prince was arrested and lay in prison some time on this charge.

Suspicion at the same time fell upon the learned class, though Fichte's Lectures had passed unnoticed a few months before. Daru had claims to be thought a *savant* himself, and might have been expected perhaps to know what was fermenting in the minds of his brethren. But here too the French

appeared equally in the dark. They were not far out when Davoust sent for Schleiermacher and loaded him with reproaches, but Wolf too was called in question, though the patriots regarded him as being not less a corrupt spot among the philologists than was Goethe among the poets.

Equally surprising is it to find Schmalz among the suspected, the very person who in the next period at the beginning of the Peace gave the signal of reaction against the influence of the patriotic party which had taken the lead in the War of Liberation. He was a Professor of Public Law, and had been requested by Schön to draw up an account of the Administrative Reform to be inserted in the newspapers. Through the French censorship news of this came to Davoust, who made a great outcry and arrested the Professor.

Meanwhile it began to be generally understood that the question of the day was no longer whether Stein should continue in office but who should succeed to his power. It was a question of immense importance at that moment, when so many innovations had become law but had not yet been carried into effect, so many had been resolved on but had not yet become law, and so many more had been conceived but not yet resolved on. As the King declared that he only parted with Stein from necessity, the logical course would have been to appoint in his place the man most likely to tread in his steps. But it was evidently improbable that the change of persons would take place without at least some change of policy. It was to be feared that in any case the tide of reform would rise no higher. No one was at hand who if he wished it

could sway that tide as Stein had done, and it was likely that the King would choose the moment of a change of Ministers to relax his energy a little. But there was danger of a much more serious retrogression than this. New Ministers might drop some important plans which were near completion, and if by some mistake on the part of the King or through some pressure exerted upon him an enemy open or secret of the Reform policy should succeed to Stein, it seemed not impossible that he might undo all that had been done to the Emancipating Edict itself. But what no doubt Stein apprehended most was that his Administrative Reform, which he regarded as his peculiar work and which was in its last stages, should, as it were, founder at the harbour's mouth, and the administration sink back into that confusion which had led to the catastrophe of Jena. The attempt has been made above to describe the old administration of Prussia, and to state precisely both what changes Stein intended to make in it and what changes we find when we examine the present administrative system of Prussia to be actually traceable to Stein. Let us now look for a moment at the provisional system which obtained at the moment of his resignation. For a considerable change had taken place since he received his first dictatorial commission in October 1807.

This change had been undertaken by him after his return from Berlin in May and had been executed by an Ordinance which received the King's signature on August 25th. It had consisted principally in two points, viz. first the abolition of that Immediate Commission which had been the instru-

ment of his earlier legislative achievements, and the absorption of its members into a grand department of internal Government called the General Finance and Police Department, and secondly of the institution of the General Conference. With this rearrangement Stein had exchanged his indefinite dictatorial commission for the position of Chief of the new department. Its extent is thus defined:

It embraces everything which has reference to the Administration of the Interior and of the Finances in general, so that there remains excluded only, the direction of Foreign Affairs, War and Justice. To it belongs everything which hitherto has required the sanction of Minister the Baron vom Stein, particularly all new legislation and new organisation, and this for primary initiation when it concerns the whole, but for cooperation when the subject is merely local and concerns only a part.

It will be observed that this Department coincides with the two Departments of the Interior and of Finance as they are marked out in his definitive scheme. But besides this Stein reserved to himself the direction of the Bank and the Maritime Institute.

The General Conference was a provisional or inchoate form of that Council of State to which Stein attached so much importance. It is laid down that

The object of these General Conferences is the needful union of all the higher Administrative Departments into a whole for the maintenance of a general oversight and coherence of the most important affairs of administration and for the avoidance of one-sided principles and arrangements prejudicial to the general interest. This union therefore has for its object unity, vigour and rapidity in the administrative action of the State.

At the General Conference Stein himself was to preside, all the members of the General Department of Finance and Police and the Chiefs of the other departments had each a seat and voice. The regular meetings were held every Wednesday, extraordinary meetings at the pleasure of the President.

At the time of Stein's retirement this system was in full operation, the first General Conference having been held on September 1st. It seems to have been taken for granted that, the exceptional state of things caused by the disasters of the war being brought to an end with the departure of the French army, the dictatorial powers held by Stein were not to pass to any successor, but that they were to be divided between two Ministers in the manner defined in Stein's definitive scheme, viz. a Minister of the Interior and a Minister of Finance. Accordingly the absorbing question of the month of November, when it had become clear that Stein must retire, was of the choice of two Ministers to succeed him; and to his own party it appeared that the whole future well-being of the country depended upon the choice being made from their own number or at least not from the Opposition.

The Candidates of the party were Schön for Finance Minister and Count Dohna-Schlobitten for the Interior. Much has already been said of Schön's character. It seems to me impossible any longer to speak of him in the language which used to be fashionable—as Stein's Mentor, superior to him intellectually and perhaps not inferior in any respect. The documents now before us display a character of

inordinate self-conceit and envy, and an intellect not so remarkable as we had been led to suppose. It would be much in his favour that Stein thought so well of him as we have many proofs that he did, were it not evident that Stein's weakest point was a careless magnanimity which gave people, provided they were free from certain faults for which he had no indulgence, credit for almost all the virtues they laid claim to. Nevertheless Schön made at this time so favourable an impression upon others beside Stein, and was so generally thought a man of force and character, that it is safest to suppose that he appears below himself in his written compositions; and as he had undoubtedly given much attention to finance and was an experienced administrator, we may be willing to believe that the Stein party were not wrong in now putting him forward.

Count Dohna-Schlobitten completely disappointed all the hopes that the party reposed in him, showing himself in office completely devoid of purpose or force. When Schön writes, 'He was known for a thoroughly fine fellow whose noble heart often led where only the most lucid intelligence is able to lead,' he seems to hint that his intelligence was not very lucid, and as to the flourish of eulogy we shall soon discover that Schön regarded Dohna very differently at the time.

Meanwhile the Opposition put forward their candidate. This was Voss, who at the time when Stein first became a Minister of State, had been, according to the provincial system then followed, Minister for the Marks, Pomerania and South Prussia. He was at this time at the head of the

Commission which negotiated with Daru at Berlin the affairs of the indemnity. It will be remembered that a certain Sack had held this position, but that Daru had held himself affronted by being expected to negotiate with one who had not the title of Excellency. He had at last declined to meet him, and when Stein at the end of May had found it impossible any longer to conduct the negotiation in person, he had recommended that the Ex-Minister Voss, who had already had communications with Daru and with whose rank no fault could be found, should take Sack's place. He was a man of the old regime and had observed Stein's innovations with much the same feelings as Yorck, whose highly characteristic criticism was given above. He had now lived for some time at Berlin in close connexion both with the Opposition and with the French officials. He fully shared the singular opinion, which to the Berlin clique seemed so self-evident that it was folly or hypocrisy to question it, that there was no ground whatever for regarding the French with suspicion or animosity, and that the only rational footing for intercourse with them was the most unreserved and friendly confidence and compliance. No one could represent the old system better, and if the King had it in mind to make a change of policy at the same time as a change of Ministry there could be no more respectable head of a Ministry of reaction than Voss. He now put himself forward as candidate for the post and, to prove his official activity, sent the King forty-two reports by a single courier. On November 14th arrived from

him a certain D'Aubier, carrying to the King a kind of political programme, to be adopted by the King on his return to Berlin. It was, in one word, complete submission to France, reduction of the army, dismissal of all officials who were open to the least suspicion of patriotism, and repudiation of all revolutionary schemes intended to set up a National Assembly in Berlin, and murderous schemes against Napoleon's life.

Everything shows that the King, though his behaviour to Stein had perhaps never been altogether cordial, did to a certain extent admire him and believe in him. Stein himself tells us that this ridiculous overture did not and could not make the smallest impression upon him, and the country was saved from all the evils of a violent and insensate reaction.

There was a middle course. Bitter experience had taught the King what mistakes he had made in the early part of his reign in the choice of advisers; slowly he had learnt to distinguish in some degree between a man with a character and a mere courtier, a man with a head and a mere official. Now that he was obliged to part with Stein, he remembered the other adviser who alone deserved to be compared with him and who, a year before, had struggled along with him against Beyme; he remembered Hardenberg. Perhaps it struck him that Stein and Hardenberg resembled each other in the way in which they had been treated by Napoleon, for only a year and a half before Napoleon had declared that he would rather fight forty years than negotiate while Hardenberg con-

tinued in office. It may have occurred to him that if Nature had denied to himself the power of reading character, she had granted that talent to Napoleon, and that he might avail himself of Napoleon's discernment by simply reversing his conclusion, for it was tolerably safe to conclude that any Minister whom Napoleon wished to expel from power in Prussia must be a good one. Not that it would be safe to recall Hardenberg, but the King wished at least to obtain his advice at such an important crisis. He was living in retirement at Marienwerder.

It is not very clear in what form the application for his advice was made. According to Schön, who was likely to have good information, as he was so intimately concerned, Stein's list of Ministers was simply laid before Hardenberg for his opinion, and Hardenberg, hoping by this means to recover his personal influence in the King's counsels—so he himself avowed later to Schön—proposed his own protégé Altenstein to be Finance Minister in the place of Schön. According to this account the appointment was substantially Hardenberg's and the responsibility of it lies with him. That the King should adopt his suggestion after having given him the trouble of advising, and while he accepted Stein's choice for the Ministry of the Interior, would seem almost inevitable, and it would be little better than spiteful to remark that Altenstein was Nagler's connexion, and that it was understood in the Queen's closet that Altenstein, if he were appointed, would find the money for the visit to St Petersburg. The other account

throws the responsibility on the King and Queen, and makes this unworthy personal motive the ruling one, for it represents the King as proposing to Hardenberg on the suggestion of Nagler the question whether he preferred Schön or Altenstein for Minister of Finance, a question which, considering Hardenberg's personal relations with Altenstein, it was hardly possible for him to answer but in one way. But it is strongly against this version of the matter that Schön, who seldom errs on the magnanimous side, knows nothing of it.

As it proved, Altenstein performed for Hardenberg the service which Addington rendered to Pitt between 1800 and 1804. He kept the place warm for him, until in 1810 Hardenberg, Napoleon's distrust of him being at last forgotten, pushed his nominee on one side and returned to power, reviving the dictatorial system which he had first introduced in 1806 and under which Stein had afterwards governed.

Thus Dohna and Altenstein succeeded to the power laid down by Stein. Golz continued to hold the Foreign Portfolio; nothing better could be suggested, since subserviency to France was to be the order of the day. Beyme had the Department of Justice with the title of High Chancellor, and thus Beyme's favour outlived in the end that of his adversary Stein, though it is to be remarked that the objection had never been to Beyme's character, but to his unsatisfactory relation as a Cabinet Secretary to the King and the Ministers, and that he now appeared as a legitimate and responsible Minister. If we regard Beyme as the

King's nominee, Altenstein as Hardenberg's, and Dohna as Stein's, it may appear that the new Ministry was an honest attempt to do the best for the country which was possible when all distinguished talent was proscribed by Napoleon. There was one redeeming point, perhaps the most important of all. Stein himself, it may be, could be better spared than Scharnhorst, and Scharnhorst remained at the War Department. His want of dash and self-assertion has been remarked above as possibly a defect in his military character, but it was most fortunate that he succeeded in escaping notice now. Many believed that his reticence and reserve were calculated, or that they were the effect of the rebuffs and slights to which his want of birth had exposed him. 'He is a crafty man in his way,' writes Schön. It does not appear that Napoleon, even when his suspicions were most roused, ever discovered the great organiser at the head of the Prussian military administration. Yet what must have been the fate of Prussia if he had insisted upon placing some puzzle-headed Mack or Massenbach there?

We shall see that with this exception the new arrangement had no success. Not only did Dohna and Altenstein completely disappoint expectation, but the reformed system was evidently too new to bear so sudden a change, so that their failure was not the ordinary failure of inefficient Ministers, which leaves room for much efficient action in that part of government which moves automatically, but an almost complete collapse of Government. Hardenberg's intervention in 1810 probably saved the

last wreck of the State, but it was an aggravation of the blow which now fell on Stein, that he could not then or for long after think that though he had fallen himself his work remained. What he had done was perhaps in amount more than he had expected to do; it was more than has been done by almost any other statesman in an equal time. But it seemed to have been done in vain, and to be likely in no long time to perish in the ruin that threatened the Prussian Monarchy.

Before he retired Stein reported on one more matter of importance which had been laid before him by the King, and the last counsel he gave his sovereign was not the least characteristic and instructive. What time should be fixed for the visit to St Petersburg? and Was it advisable for the royal family to return at once to Berlin now that the evacuation of it by the French troops made return possible? These two questions were submitted to him, and Stein's report is dated November 22nd.

Those who were connected with this Ministry of Reform, when later they looked back upon the period which the King spent at Königsberg, were aware that one cause why so many reforms were accomplished was that the King was at Königsberg and not at Berlin. In other words, he rose above himself when he was separated from his Court. In general it may be observed of the absolute monarchies of the Continent in the 17th and 18th centuries, that the institution of Monarchy was beneficial but that it was corrupted by its association with a Court. The vigorous and successful Monarchs

of that age—there were many—almost always quarrelled with court-life. Such had been conspicuously the case with Frederick William I. and Frederick the Great; such also with the Czar Peter, Charles XII., the Emperor Joseph. The violent catastrophe of Monarchy in France was not less conspicuously caused by the luxuriance with which court-life had been allowed to flourish and the elaboration with which the Kings had cultivated it. In France the King was swallowed up by the Court, his life sacrificed to its ceremonial, his intellect sophisticated, and his very sense of his own interest confused by its artificial ways of thinking. It is in this light that the Court appears to Stein, and he evidently fears that the return to Berlin will be equivalent to a return to that corrupting atmosphere from which the King had imbibed the feebleness which had ruined his reign. After speaking of the joy with which the people will welcome the King back to his capital, he continues thus :

At the same time residence in Berlin will bring the King into immediate contact with all the machinery of domestic and foreign intrigue which is now set in such violent motion, he will be watched more carefully on all sides, and *will not be able to act with so much external independence in the great events which are to be expected in the following year.*

He must accordingly secure himself against the influence of foreign Cabals, withdraw himself more from observation, and maintain as much as possible his external independence.

One of the principal instruments of the domestic Cabal is General Köckeritz. He is the point of union for a multitude of people partly weak, timid and inert, partly slaves of old routine, partly subject to foreign influence; he is the channel through which their opinions reach the Sovereign, and a spy upon his resolutions, and he very often hinders the access of well-disposed

people to the Sovereign. His dismissal would have the most beneficial results, and would be a mark of the Sovereign's esteem for the opinion of the well-disposed and faithful servants of his person and his State.

On the point of taking his departure Stein sees no reason for sparing Köckeritz any longer. His wrath against him has now been pent up for two years and a half, since the time when out of consideration for the King's feelings he omitted a similar attack in his Representation of the Faulty Organisation, &c. (Vol. I. p. 271). He continues :

Things of the greatest moment are read and spoken of in the interior of the family, very much of less importance is discussed in the evening at tea, the chamber of Frau v. Voss is not without visitors, here are seen ambassadors, soldiers, men of affairs, people of all sorts and ways of thinking—how is it possible with such an arrangement to keep secrets? The most important affairs become the talk of the town—it is known, for instance, that I have laid Don Cevallos' Memoir before the King, and the contents of this document, so disgraceful to Napoleon, are made known,—it is known to women of no mark what persons have been proposed by me for Finance Minister and Minister of the Interior—*now* when it is of the utmost importance that my share in these appointments should remain secret.

It is necessary therefore that the Court should consist only of persons of perfect rectitude and reticence, who deserve to be near the Sovereign. — is charged with a disposition to chattering and a propensity to lying ; does such a person deserve to share the entire life of the royal family ? — is notorious for his interested views, his covetousness, which expresses itself in many ways, he is an invalid, his whole appearance a caricature ; strange, that the choice and oversight over the King's servants should remain entrusted to him ! I had reason to hope that H. v. Maltzahn would obtain his place, this hope seems now frustrated.

Let these people be dismissed, and let the visits which the Countess Voss receives be differently arranged ; let her fix certain

days and hours for seeing people, and be inaccessible at other times.

The Countess has not a word in her diary, recently published, about this attack upon her receptions. Stein adds :

Residence in Berlin should not be declared or considered as a fixed arrangement, but the King's resolution often and for long periods to visit his other capitals, such as Königsberg and Breslau, ought to be announced. It would be very advisable to send the Crown Prince to study at Königsberg.

If the return to Berlin is necessary and beneficial as gratifying the hopes and quieting the doubts of many people, the visit to St Petersburg would have to be postponed. This would besides have the appearance abroad of a political journey, and throw open to no good purpose a wide field to conjecture and speculation, so that it is advisable to postpone it till the summer.

The visit to St Petersburg was not given up, but it is observable that the King remained for a whole year longer at Königsberg and also that in 1813, when he at last roused himself to resist the tyrant, his first step was to quit Berlin for Breslau.

Two days after the date of this report, on November 24th, Stein procured the royal assent to his great scheme of Administrative Reform, and laid down his office.

The King declared that he sanctioned the scheme 'with full assurance of its solidity,' but, as we have seen, for want of the last formality, publication, it did not become law. He at the same time declares that he will pay the greatest regard to the list of recommendations to appointments which Stein had sent in, and would have accepted it at once, but that he thought it right that the new heads of

departments should have a voice in the matter, and of these, Count Dohna was absent. He adds :

It is indeed a most painful feeling to me that I am compelled to part with a man of your sort who had the most just claim on my confidence and at the same time had the public confidence in the most lively degree.

It is a consolation that these reflexions, and with them the consciousness of having laid the first foundation, given the first impulse to a new, improved, and strengthened organisation of the fabric of the State, which lay in ruins, must afford you the deepest and at the same time the noblest satisfaction and solace.

FRIEDRICH WILHELM.

CHAPTER V.

STEIN'S PROSCRIPTION.

STEIN was now in circumstances similar to those in which Hardenberg had found himself in the middle of 1807. He was about to lay down a dictatorship and to transmit the government of the State into other hands. But in another respect his circumstances were unlike, for he had considerable doubt of the ability of his successors to carry on his work, whereas Hardenberg knew that a strong man, a man in matters of internal government stronger than himself, was to succeed him. In spite of this difference, however, he felt no less than Hardenberg had felt a desire to leave behind him some written document which might convey his opinion about the requirements of the State. We remember Hardenberg's Political Testament, how he composed a sort of pamphlet, in which he examined each department of State and suggested, much at his ease, the sweeping changes that another was to introduce. Stein was induced by somewhat different considerations to leave a Political Testament. He was no friend of

unnecessary writing ; scarcely ever in his life, indeed, did he write anything without an immediate practical object. But his work was broken in the middle, and he wanted his successors to know what plans he had been prevented from bringing forward. It was also urgently necessary, even at the risk of appearing to boast or to preach, that he should leave some testimony to the high principles and objects he had kept before his mind, which were now only too likely to be forgotten. It seems that he had been turning this plan over in his thoughts for some time. A general account of the changes recently made in Prussia had been admitted, though naturally without any mention of Stein's name, into the *Moniteur* of October 15th. We have seen him also recommending the King to publish a similar recital in a proclamation to his people, and how the King declined to do this, apparently for the very reason for which Stein desired it to be done, namely, that it would commit him to the Stein policy. The draught of this Proclamation lies before us and bears date October 21st. So far as it merely recapitulates what the reader knows already it need not detain us, but what does it reveal about the further schemes which the Administration had in view? To show this I extract the following paragraphs, observing that their language was necessarily made somewhat general, both because the designs they announced were not yet quite mature, and because they were announced within hearing of Napoleon.

Wherever a distinction of rights between citizen and citizen still remains it must be levelled.

All inequalities in the laws and in legal procedure must be

removed, every special jurisdiction must cease; for jurisdiction flows from sovereign power, not from landownership, and all citizens of the State must be equal before the law and before the laws.

In the military class you see already all exclusive pretensions abolished. For the future only the better-grounded pretensions of merit, of personal worth and attainments, must be recognized in that service, and through them it must be open to the meanest and poorest as to the highest in rank and wealth to reach the highest degrees of military honour. No longer must degrading treatment crush and harden the defender of the country, no disgraceful corporal punishment make the man of honour shrink from gladly fulfilling the sacred duty, common to all citizens, of bearing arms for the fatherland.

Your King at the same time meditates giving simplicity and promptitude to the administration of your affairs and to the despatch of business in all the offices from the highest to the lowest. It is my earnest desire that henceforth there be no longer more writing than doing, that so much time be no longer wasted in empty formalities. This is not the place to make known what has been resolved with this object. It shall be made known at the proper time. No branch either of the Constitution or of the Administration of the State but awaits important improvements.

Lest however in your anxiety for what is temporal you overlook what is eternal I shall make religion and its exercise my special and preeminent care. To the end that this inmost source of life, whence comes strength to perform all duties of the man and the citizen, be never dried up within you, there shall be held watchful oversight alike over the sanctity of public worship, and over the purity and blamelessness of the order which is devoted exclusively to the service of religion and is bound by doctrine and example to be as guides and instructors to adult men, and protection and furtherance shall be rendered, without distinction of confessions, to their consideration and dignity.

Also the education of youth to become a vigorous generation, maintaining and unfolding further the high objects of the State, is already the subject of the serious consideration of the officials

presiding over that province and will continue to be so. The youth of Prussia must at last enter into the enjoyment of the long-prepared uniform system of national culture based upon a new and solid foundation. The zeal and energy of the men devoted to this honourable occupation must be supported by my most sympathetic care even for their material welfare.

If we examine these paragraphs carefully, we shall find that they point partly at measures which we have already considered, but that they also announce further measures soon to be proposed. In the military paragraph the principle of universal conscription is very timidly and obscurely intimated. The paragraph immediately following describes plainly the Administrative Reform, which was so nearly complete, in its two great parts, the Reform of the Central and that of the Local Administration. But it seems to hint at something more. The statement that the Constitution as well as the Administration will receive important alterations is evidently not inserted for nothing. Such an expression is evidently of the kind that would be used if, for example, some experiment in parliamentary government were about to be made.

Besides this we make out the following programme, (1) Abolition of patrimonial jurisdiction, (2) an Ecclesiastical Reform, (3) an Educational Reform.

A Political Testament would naturally take a somewhat different form from a Proclamation, as being intended for circulation, not among the people, but only among a few officials, and therefore admitting of more particularity and precision. The document which was now, in the last days of Stein's

official life, drawn up differs just so from the Proclamation. It is as follows :

Circumstances which it is needless to describe demanded my retirement from the public service, for which I live and for which I shall live.

In foreign affairs necessity rules with such powerful sway that the voice of an individual has here little effect. I gave my attention to internal administration. The problem was to remove the discord (*Disharmonie*) which exists in the nation, to terminate the strife of classes which destroyed our happiness, to create for each man the legal possibility of developing his powers freely in a moral direction, and in this way to force the nation to love King and Country in such sort as gladly to devote property and life for them.

With your assistance, gentlemen, much is already done. The last relic of slavery, hereditary serfdom, is abolished, and that sure bulwark of a throne, the will of free men, is set up. The unrestricted right to the acquisition of landed property has been proclaimed. To the people has been restored the permission to furnish themselves with the first necessities of life. The Towns have been freed from tutelage, and other fetters of less importance, which only benefited individuals and so injured patriotism, have been loosed. Let what has been already done be firmly maintained, and but few capital steps remain to be taken. I take the liberty of enumerating them to you one by one, not to guide your actions, for your insight and patriotism need no guidance, but to give you a standard by which you may estimate my actions and views.

1. Government can only proceed from the Sovereign Power. When the right to determine and guide the actions of a fellow-subject can be inherited and purchased with a piece of ground, the Sovereign Power loses at once its dignity, and in the aggrieved subject attachment to the State is weakened. Be no man master but the King so far as that term denotes the power of police, and let his prerogative be exercised by his delegate alone. Proposals for carrying out this principle have already issued from the General Department.

2. Let him who has jurisdiction be dependent only on the

Sovereign Power. For it weakens the belief in its own indefeasible right, it shakes the opinion of its own high dignity and the sense of its inviolable sanctity, when it forces a subject to seek justice in a court where the judge is dependent on his adversary. The abolition of Patrimonial Jurisdiction is already initiated.

3. Hereditary serfdom is abolished. In some districts however there subsist Ordinances of Service which abridge the liberty of the people. Attempts have also been made, as the last report of the Civil Commissaries of the Province of Silesia shows, to restore hereditary serfdom in some points by new Ordinances of Service. On this side will the most violent assault be made upon the first Fundamental Law of our State, our Habeas Corpus Act. Till now these attempts seemed to me to deserve no attention, partly because they were made only by some landowners, who are not the nation but only the smallest part of it, but especially because it was not to be thought of that these individuals should make gain at the expense of the personality of numerous fellow-subjects. In my opinion no new Ordinances of Service are needed but only the abolition of those which exist. What the Code enacts about the condition of servants seems to me fully sufficient. On those three propositions the freedom of the subject, his right and his fidelity, are grounded. All arrangements which are deduced from them can only do good. The next means of improvement seems to be

4. A universal national representation. May the right and power of our King ever remain to us, as they were to me, sacred! But that this right and this unrestricted power may do the good which it is in them to do, it seemed to me necessary to give to the Sovereign Power a means of informing itself of the wishes of the nation, and of giving life to its decrees. When the nation is entirely denied a share in the operations of the State, when it is forbidden even to administer its own communal affairs, it is speedily led to regard the Government as either indifferent, or in particular cases as even opposed to itself. Hence the resistance, or at least coldness, which is shown when sacrifices are demanded for the existence of the State. Hitherto where popular representation existed among us it was most imperfectly organised. My plan therefore was that every active citizen of the State, whether

he possessed too hides or one, whether he was engaged in agriculture, manufacture, or trade, whether he had the business of a citizen, or was attached to the State by intellectual ties, had a right to representation. Several plans which have been submitted to me have been by me laid before the King. On the execution or rejection of such a plan depends the weal or woe of our State, for in this way only can the spirit of the nation be positively awakened and quickened.

5. Between our two principal classes, that of the noblesse and that of the citizen, there exists absolutely no connexion. In passing from the one to the other a man renounces his former class entirely. This has produced of necessity the tension which we see. The noblesse is too numerous to maintain the high importance which may be attributed to it, and it is constantly increasing in numbers. In the occupation which till now it monopolised and the official service to which it alone was admitted it has been necessary for the preservation of the whole State to allow competition. The noblesse will be obliged in consequence to enter into businesses and occupations which conflict with the distinction to which it lays claim in right of birth. This will make it an object of mockery, and will deprive it by a speedy consequence even of the respect to which the nobleman is entitled merely as a citizen of the State. At present every class separately demands the support of the Sovereign Power, and whatever good, whatever right, is done to one, another regards as a derogation. This injures public spirit and confidence in the Government. This view has led me to recognize the necessity of a reform of the noblesse. The negotiations on this subject lie before you. By a union of the noblesse with the other Estates the nation will be linked together so as to form a whole, and at the same time the memory of noble actions which deserve immortality will be preserved in a higher degree. This union meanwhile will

6. Give a vital foundation to the universal obligation to defend the country, and this universality also must of necessity excite a corresponding zeal for the Government in every class. The peasant-class alone, having been so long held back by hereditary serfdom, will still need some positive support to increase its personal sense of importance. Under this head I place

7. The adoption of legal measures for the abolition of *corvées*. Fixed Services rendered by the possessor of one piece of land to the possessor of another are indeed no evil in themselves, provided that personal freedom is possessed along with them. Still such services bring with them a certain dependence, a certain arbitrary treatment of those who serve, which is prejudicial to the national spirit. It only needs that the State should create the legal possibility of the extinction of them (just as it favours the dissolution of commonalties) so that each may be able to demand a settlement on fixed conditions. This will be sufficient, taken together with that progress of the people which must necessarily follow from those fundamental principles, to cause those who owe such services to make use of the permission granted to them.

8. In order however that all these arrangements may fully attain their end, the internal development of the nation, and that loyalty and faith, love to King and Country, may truly prosper; the religious feeling of the people must be quickened into new life. This cannot be accomplished by prescriptions and ordinances alone. And yet it behoves the Government earnestly to take to heart this great interest, and by the dismissal of unworthy clergymen, the rejection of frivolous or ignorant Candidates, and the improvement of theological seminaries, to restore the dignity of the clerical order; and also by an appropriate settlement of clerical dues, and by provision for the decorous solemnity of the external worship of God, to promote attachment to the ecclesiastical institutions.

9. In this department however, as in general, most is to be expected from the education and instruction of youth. Could we by a method grounded on the internal nature of man develop from within every spiritual gift, rouse and nourish every noble principle of life, carefully avoiding one-sided culture, could we diligently nurse those instincts, hitherto so often with shallow indifference disregarded, on which rests the force and dignity of man,

Love to God, King, and Fatherland,

then might we hope to see a generation grow up vigorous both in body and soul, and a better prospect for the future unfold itself. Assuredly if the views here suggested should be seriously

pursued, all small defects of our Constitution, for example the defects of our financial system, will speedily disappear. I may be allowed, gentlemen, to congratulate you on being called to this task, and even though many difficulties await you, your courage will be sustained and the success of your endeavours assured by a sense of the importance of the work and by the good will and constancy of the King, for which pledges have been given in the new arrangements, civil and military, which have been made.

This Testament is dated November 24th, that is, the day of Stein's resignation, but he delayed for some time afterwards to add his signature. The document resembles closely in its general design and in its substance the draught Proclamation to which I have compared it, but is much more definite and conveys in plain language many things which in the Proclamation were only hinted at. In particular we discover from it that Stein had advanced some way in the preparation of a scheme of national representation, and also that he meditated a reform of the noblesse.

The former discovery, though it will not surprise us, is evidently of the greatest importance, and we should be glad to be able to add from other sources further information about the scheme. What in later life Stein thought on this subject we shall have other opportunities of considering, and we have already observed that at an earlier time when he was only Finance Minister he had been impressed with the necessity, if only on financial grounds, of giving Prussia some sort of parliamentary constitution. But as he was not allowed time during his dictatorial ministry to realise these views, so little information remains to us about the deliberations on the subject,

which were broken off by his retirement. He tells us that 'several plans had been submitted to him;' of these only one has been preserved, the author of which was his old friend and successor in Westphalia, Vincke. From this paper I extract here whatever is most instructive. Stein's remark about the resistance or at least coldness shown by the people when sacrifices were required in consequence of their want of representation, might have been suggested by the following :

Never was the want of well-constituted Estates more painfully felt than in the late unhappy time, in the Provinces which either were not provided with them at all, or in which they were ill composed, or their practical influence had been quite destroyed; particularly when the Local Administration on its side was not equal to the exigence and could not promptly and suitably re-organise them so as they might have been most useful to the district in the new circumstances, but continued the old feud with new vigour for fear of losing something of their imagined estimation.

He asks the question whether representation is reconcilable with monarchical institutions and replies that a Monarch who is conscious of high aims and does not reduce everything to money and soldiers, in fact that a *Prussian* Monarch will neither fear nor be ashamed of the co-operation of the best and highest forces in the administration of the State; and he points to the contrast at that moment so striking between England and France, remarking how even under a declining ruler England, because she had a representation and a public opinion, maintained herself alone against Napoleon, who on the other side could never hand on his power to a successor because he had not given his State a consti-

tution, and how the English King's power, though restricted for evil, was very great for good. He then comes closer to the actual circumstances of Prussia, which he paints clearly in a few sentences.

In the Prussian State we were accustomed to divide the inhabitants into three different classes, Peasants, Citizens, and Nobles; sometimes we added the Lords (Standesherrn) as owners of the larger estates, to which were attached some sovereign Rights, and the Spirituality, which was represented only by the members of Chapters, Abbots, Spiritual Orders of Knighthood, and Universities. The two latter (*i.e.* Citizens and Nobles) might for the future disappear as separate classes; the establishment of unlimited free trade will remove the distinction between Town and Country; they will cease to regard each other as enemies, and have for the future a common interest; hereditary serfdom is abolished; the way is open for a free circulation of landed property, which will favour the increase of the small free landowners; the Noblesse is cut adrift from the monopoly of large landed Estates and permitted to enter into trade; its preferential right to officers' posts is at an end; if compulsory military service should be introduced again it will be extended to all inhabitants; patrimonial jurisdiction and *privilegia fori* will have to go too, as well as exemption from taxes where it still exists, though no doubt with compensation. Thus of the old characteristic marks of noblesse which distinguished it from the other classes there remains (for good or ill, that is nothing to the purpose) nothing beyond titles and coats of arms, mere rank which cannot serve as the basis for a representative system, and we are not bound by any considerations of rank in civil society in determining who are the most serviceable men for speakers and popular representatives.

He adds that property may still be the basis of representation, as in the ancient Germanic system; only personal property, as well as real, must now be recognized. He goes on to compare the systems of representation which had been established in the Napoleonic States (under which, he says, 'the

tions. According to Schön the question was left principally in his hands; but it was soon found that it was a necessary preliminary, before a true popular representative could appear in a popular parliament, to create a completely independent class of people who should look up to the Sovereign alone.

Thus we saw the necessity of the abolition of Patrimonial Jurisdiction, and of the so-called Lord's Right (*i.e.* the Right of the landowner, his police authority bought and sold with the estate). As this outgrowth of feudalism was abolished under Cromwell, as the same thing happened in Scotland at its union with England, as in France the abolition took place at once at the Revolution, as Napoleon abolished it along with the Constitution in all countries where he set up client sovereigns, so was this obsolete relic of feudalism to be swept away in our country too. Till now the noblesse exercised a part of the sovereign power through patrimonial jurisdiction and the Lord's Right, the noblesse alone were landowners in the full sense, and thus a part of the sovereign power was in the hands of particular families. The Edict of October swept away this exclusive right of property in land, the territorial aristocracy was swept away; patrimonial jurisdiction and the Lord's Right, as involved in it, was now to go too. Henceforth law was to be administered only in the King's name, only in the King's name was an act of sovereign power to be performed.

He goes on to speak of the pamphlets that were written to prepare the public mind for this change, and particularly of that pamphlet by Scheffner, a dialogue between a Count, a Baron, and a Steward, which being sent by Schön with a letter to Professor Schmalz in Berlin brought the Professor into trouble, as has been related above.

It would be interesting to learn in detail in what way Stein proposed to reform the noblesse. Conducting in Prussia a Reform which is parallel to the

Revolution in France, it was manifestly a great difficulty to devise any plan by which class privilege could be rehabilitated. And yet, as we see by the words of the Testament, he did hope to do this. While he most clearly perceived that the noblesse could not continue in its old estimation, deprived of its monopolies of landed property and of official service, he still believed it possible to retain what was valuable in the old institution. He hoped in some way to destroy its isolation, 'to unite it with the other Estates,' and yet still to preserve, and in a higher degree than hitherto, 'the memory of noble actions which deserve immortality;' that evidently means, to preserve the institution itself. Pertz, however, has not been able to find the papers which Stein left behind him on this particular scheme, and it will be convenient to defer to a later chapter the consideration of his views on the privileges of the noblesse.

The programme laid down in Stein's Testament was in part carried into effect by succeeding Ministers. It is the glory of W. v. Humboldt to have made in the next year an educational reform such as the Testament describes. The War of Liberation brought with it the universal obligation to military service. The national representation and the abolition of patrimonial jurisdiction and police came also, but not till another generation had passed; they were among the acquisitions of the great legislative period that followed 1848. As we said in speaking of Hardenberg's Testament, it is comparatively an easy thing to make sweeping suggestions; the measure of the statesman is given by what he accom-

plishes. But the plans mentioned in Stein's Testament were not, like those in Hardenberg's, mere suggestions; most of them had been already taken in hand and pushed through some preliminary stages. That the Minister had both the courage and the power to carry them into effect could not be doubted, when it was considered what vast reforms had been already completed by him. In spite of bitter opposition from some classes, his popularity was great and commanding, and I think it clear that he had acquired the steady favour of the King in spite of his imperiousness. In order to understand the vastness of the fabric he was piling up, of which, as it were, only the ruins have been the foundation of Prussia's modern greatness, we have to imagine one event to have turned out differently. Let us suppose that the King could have been brought to adopt the war-policy and, what would have been the necessary consequence, to refuse to part with Stein. In that case the year 1809 would have witnessed at once the completion of all that Stein meditated, and a mighty War of Liberation besides. In the midst of an upheaval of all Germany parallel to the upheaval of Spain in 1808, Prussia would have acquired at once her universal obligation of military service, her Landwehr, and her National Parliament, while her noblesse would have been rebaptized in the blood which would have flowed where Scharnhorst and Gneisenau came to the help of the Archduke Charles.

How closely Stein hoped to blend reform and war appears from a proposal which he threw out in consultation with some of the leading military men,

from one of whom, Boyen, Pertz had the story. He suggested that at the commencement of hostilities the King should proclaim all nobility to be in abeyance, and that he would only recognize the titles of such nobles as should distinguish themselves in the war.

The 24th of November was the day on which Stein ceased to be Minister, but he remained at Königsberg till December 4th. During this time we find him petitioning the King that the Order of the Black Eagle may be given to Minister v. Schrötter, whose office of Minister for the Prussian Province was to be swept away by the Administrative Reform, and upon whom as Minister of the Province which had given occasion to most of the great Reforms, particularly the Emancipating Edict and the Town Ordinance, a very large proportion of labour had fallen. On the other hand, Stein's warm admirer Scheffner, shocked at the apparent disgrace which accompanied his fall, petitions the King that the very same honour may be bestowed upon Stein, declaring that 'all the just-thinking part of the nation are pained to see so noble and profoundly skilful a statesman driven from the King's side by the lying tales of wretched, envious,—not foreign people.' The King replies that at the moment it would be in the highest degree impolitic to show Stein any mark of honour, and at the same time indignantly, and as it seems to me truly, denies the truth of the charge which Scheffner had insinuated against him, hinting that it was not the Berlin party but Napoleon who had overthrown Stein. He declares that 'only false patriots and people either ill-disposed or

exceedingly ignorant could interpret Stein's dismissal, which was caused by an urgent political necessity (*i.e.* by Napoleon's will), in such a manner.'

An official at Königsberg, well known to us as not over-partial to Stein, viz. Schön, kept a diary between November 29th, 1808, and January 6th, 1809, which has been printed and which may help us to picture the condition of things at the moment after Stein's fall. It begins with that explanation of the occurrence which has been quoted above. 'The Court tolerated him as long as there was danger. The aggrieved diplomatists, accustomed to rule everything, concealed their spite at being subordinated to the Interior. The old aristocrats were silent so long as they feared France more. But from the moment that a settlement was made with France, they determined on Stein's fall, &c., &c.' This is the account which I have given reasons for disbelieving. He closes it by saying, 'The malcontents were few, and there were thousands against them, but the voice of the thousands did not reach the King.' Then follow some notes which will interest us :

Nov. 30. Visited Stein. He is quite composed. He knows now the people that played him false. Sack had written to him that Voss had declared my letters to Schmalz about the abolition of Patrimonial Jurisdiction to be revolutionary. So they are, but against King Voss and Co., not against my lawful King.

The ridicule of the new Ministers Dohna and Altenstein increases. People sneer, truly enough, that they would never have been chosen if the one were not a Count and the other a Baron. After all, at the moment there were no others to choose. People were wanted who without having taken Stein's side would not directly counterwork his plans, at least not deliberately. Altenstein indeed might do it out of hatred to Stein: Dohna

will do it out of weakness. . . . Stein has proposed me for Minister of Finance. His proposal is the greatest honour I could receive. The King did not want me, and at the same time I begged Stein to withdraw his proposal. Without Stein I could not succeed : I should have been ridiculous.

December 1st. In the evening we were together at R's. Stein was irritated with Altenstein on account of his arrogant behaviour.

Schladerer said to me to-day that every one was angry at Stein having proposed Beyme. Scharnhorst and I are responsible. It is necessary. Yes ! if Beyme were the devil ; for we want force, and that he has, and his faults will disappear when he may act openly and no longer behind a curtain. He is a man, and that is more than Golz, or Dohna, or Altenstein are.

December 2. A visit to-day from Scharnhorst, a cunning man in his way. A singular person, full of power under the appearance of weakness. . . . At Auerswald's in the evening. Stein, fine fellow ! tries everything at once to move me to stand by Dohna. I shall do my part, but the thing will hardly do ! I fancy there are negotiations between Stein and the Queen through Gneisenau. . . .

December 3rd. Noon. At Scheffner's with Stein, the new Ministers, and the Schrötters. All signs show that the time of weakness is beginning : Dohna shrinks from everything disagreeable. This evening he had a conference with Nagler at his house. A good beginning ! And I am to stand by him ! Hardly . . . My wife asked Countess Voss to-day why she avoided her. She vowed she had nothing against her or me. But how can the lady help being false ? she has been 60 years at the Court. Her intimate N(agler) will no doubt do his part.

Dec. 4. Visited Stein. He was very ill satisfied with his high conversation of yesterday (with the Queen?). Never yet had a Minister the popularity that Stein has. There is a universal enthusiasm for him. God help us ! He wants me to stand by Dohna. Well, I will, because he wishes it. . . . Stein made a mistake in wishing to put a Frenchman (Ancillon) instead of Delbrück as tutor to the Prince. That that plan is frustrated is the only good consequence of Stein's fall.

Evening. My mind so restless, so excited. I could dream so pleasantly, and all is lost.

Dec. 5th. Stein left. I looked after him. He takes much with him, the attachment of all right-thinking men. Stein sent his farewell (*i.e.* the Testament). It contains everything, and the great man makes an exit worthy of him.

Fate seems to think a further humiliation of Prussia necessary. Accidentally Hardenberg, the good, extremely good, but at times weak Hardenberg, must be at Marienwerder, when Dohna was summoned, and he recommended to him his domestic private tutor (Hofmeister) N—. Dohna now, full of Hardenberg, takes his tail for him, mistrusts what Stein said, and is guided by N—. Stein must have heard much about this man from the Court people, for his exasperation against him was surprising.

Dec. 6. G——u (Gneisenau?) told me Hardenberg had advised the King not to promote me. I regard his advice as that of a good man, though the motive of it was weakness. Nagler and Altenstein, really only the former, suggested it, but in fact I am altogether unsuitable in times like these for a high post. My way of thinking is too much out of tune with that of the generation which rules now. Ten years more must pass before I suit the times. Heaven watches over me!

Dec. 7th. All business standing still. This evening Nicolovius told me at the concert that the King and Queen's trip to St Petersburg is settled. God help us! that our King, for the most part so just and good, should have no true friend to tell him the truth, and whom he regards enough to take it as such.

Dec. 8th. Scharnhorst is attacked directly to-day by Kalkreuth through Kockeritz. The man still hopes that necessity will keep us right, and so means to stay. A fine fellow!

Dec. 9th. Public affairs excite me so that I am afraid of getting a nervous fever. This evening I called on Dohna—the Minister—Lord help us all! The man seems quite possessed by Nagler and Altenstein. He has a nervous dread of speaking to any one else about anything. He trembles at every name that

¹ 'Abends besuchte ich Dohna—den Minister—Gott stehe uns bei!' The translation is suggested by a very parallel passage in a letter of Canning about Addington. 'Of his general moral character, &c. it is impossible to doubt.. but as to his fitness to be Minister, Lord help us all!' Stapleton, *G. Canning and his Times*, p. 69.

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Dec. 10th. To-day I receive the information that I am Privy Councillor of State, but for fear I should be proud Nagler has arranged it so that I am informed of it not by the King, but by the two Ministers. Besides the Council of State is suspended. Dohna and Altenstein rule the State! What Stein did not think himself equal to is undertaken coolly and confidently by Altenstein and Dohna. Hardenberg besought all who were around him to stand by him; Stein declared, 'I have tried it alone, and nothing great can be done. I must have help'—he creates the General Department and the General Conference that he may have assistance, and experience proved the goodness of the arrangement. And these gentlemen undo it all. By themselves they are enough, quite enough!

Dec. 11th. A visit from Klewitz, a fine, sincere fellow. He read me what he had written to the new Ministers about the suspension of the Council of State and their behaviour towards him and me. He has spoken out like the fine fellow that he is. I shall say nothing; my speaking would ruin all, and so he thinks. He was inspired in writing by Stein's spirit!

Nicolovius, Rhediger, Röckner—they are all sad. They have all given up hope. The King's journey to St Petersburg makes a painful impression. That the good, *intelligent* King, the man who sacrifices life and all to his people, should have let himself be so far misled!

Dec. 12th. If I were asked to classify the people in the Prussian State I should propose the following classification. (a) The old aristocrats who only care about themselves and want to keep the King as one of themselves. The State may go, for all they care, so long as the land-system remains. They use the French as weapons in their war. . . . These make a regular party. (b) The people who love King and Country, who want us to be a nation and the King to be a king. They want to sweep away what made us unhappy. They are no party, for they neither have nor want any association, and they count all petty proceedings unworthy of them. (c) The eclectics who want to keep themselves in the public service though they have a dim perception that they are not worthy of it. They make a close faction,

resort to the most vulgar tricks, and are a thoroughly shabby set. . . . Baron Rhediger, the enlightened and subtle Silesian, visited me. He is indignant at Altenstein's opposition to Stein. Stein was terribly hard on him, because he behaved improperly towards him, but this sort of revenge is really too bad! . . . The man is much sunk, he had always a touch of craft, visible in the background, but now that he is the weak tool of N— he falls altogether.

Dec. 15th. Gneisenau is a man for great deeds. He has both vigour and cultivation. A man of heart and head! Of all the military men we have, assuredly the one I would most willingly entrust an army to!

Dec. 20th. The State is forgotten, we live entirely in the journey to St Petersburg.

Dec. 21—29. Things go on as before. Not a word more of the great Stein views. Petty patchwork, and making the fortune of individuals by giving them places! Fine work for a Minister! . . . Stein is blamed for not having been secret enough. Well! that is natural, for cunning must hate frankness, or it would be nothing. The great man despises such miserable views. That Stein could be secret follows from this, that he has not fully opened himself to any one. To me most, but not completely by a great deal. But it is too degrading to the great man even to think of defending him against such insects.

On the 27th the King and Queen left for St Petersburg. Scharnhorst went too with Prince Wilhelm. . . . The King hands over the Government to Ministers Golz, Dohna, and Altenstein. Stein never enjoyed such confidence, on the contrary he was feared.

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The letter of Stein's here mentioned runs as follows :

Dec. 26th, 1808.

Your friendly letter of the 19th I have had the honour of receiving. I am glad to see the Department of Trade placed definitively in your hand, but am not a little surprised to see the Council of State suspended instead of being put in activity and used for the discussion and settlement of several acts of general legislation...and that some provisional measures are not adopted to appease the public creditor, &c. You will be pleased to hear that in a representation to the King from the Glogau Estates, which is to be laid before him on his return, they say that his Majesty is entreated to make us all happy by a new Constitution adapted to present circumstances, tested before the whole nation and received with joy, and by the introduction of a Representative System.

We must support and strengthen the good Dohna. His brother Fritz and H. v. Reder, a very able cultivated person, influences him beneficially and strengthens him. I do not believe that Minister Hardenberg has worked against you, I know he values you highly.

I am troubled by A(ltenstein)'s behaviour. His vanity is enough to account for anything; a shallow, crafty, adroit N(agler) is an excellent instrument to work on it, and work on it he will, and maintain himself by means of it.

I shall stay here till the middle of January; by that time much will be cleared up, and then I shall go to Breslau.

Remember me to our honest friends Scheffner and Hufeland, and keep your friendly feelings towards me; you may be assured that mine towards you are unalterable.

Schön's diary throws a more vivid flash upon the scene of Stein's labours just at the moment when they came to an end than any other document throws upon those labours while they were proceeding. These notes bring to light the bitterness that reigned between Stein and Altenstein, a fact of which we should be glad to know more, and the contempt which

Schön felt for that Dohna whom he extols so much in chronicling this very time. But the most curious discovery which the reader makes from them is, that Schön regarded his chief at the time of his fall quite otherwise than as he regarded him when he wrote his autobiography and many other late reminiscences of Stein. We have seen all along how disparaging those reminiscences are, and perhaps the reader may have thought, in spite of all the arguments which have been urged above against their trustworthiness, that after all they reflect the plain prosaic feeling which Stein's colleagues entertained towards him while he was among them, and that the notion of his being a great or extraordinary person was an after-thought suggested by the vast amount of reform which, owing less to him than to those colleagues themselves, was accomplished for Prussia while he was Minister. Such a notion, in itself plausible enough, is refuted once for all by this diary. It shows us that while Stein was present he appeared to his colleagues a great man, and that the *after-thought*, and that only the after-thought of one of them, was that there was really nothing so very remarkable about him. In these notices there is scarcely a word about Stein which is not in the highest degree enthusiastic; and not a single word has been suppressed in my extracts which has another character. Particularly it should be noted that Schön's own relation to Stein appears in this diary wholly different from what he afterwards represented it to be. Stein is not merely a great man in so far as he carries out with wonderful energy the ideas of his philosopher Schön, who not only is, but is generally understood to be the

more important man of the two; so Schön was used in after days to represent it. In this diary Schön describes himself as insignificant in comparison with his chief—‘without Stein I should be ridiculous’—and at the same time he describes himself not at all as Stein’s teacher, but rather as his pupil, ‘He has not fully opened himself to any one; to me most, but not completely by a great deal.’

It is of special importance to note this just here, because Schön has founded one of his strangest pretensions to appropriate the fame of his chief upon the events of these days. It appears that Schön was commissioned to draw up for Stein his Testament. The words of that Testament are in the main his; Stein only made a few corrections in his draught; and Schön gives us to understand that this was because the ideas were his and not Stein’s, and Stein could not trust himself to give expression to them. I believe that the reader, after reading the Testament itself and Schön’s diary, in which the receipt of the Testament with Stein’s signature is recorded, will see for himself the quaint absurdity of this pretension. What is the Testament? Is it an eloquent political pamphlet full of reasonings worthy of a Burke or a Montesquieu? If so, doubtless it is an important fact that Schön was charged to write it. But it is only a list of measures which Stein had been prevented from completing during his Ministry. These measures had occupied Stein’s attention for some time, and it could not have been very difficult for him to enumerate them, or even to give the reasons why they should be adopted in the extremely curt

style adopted in the Testament. Evidently the reason why Stein did not write the Testament himself was not because it was too difficult, but because it was too easy. All that it was necessary for him to do was to see that no ill-chosen or improper word was allowed to creep into a document signed with his name. It would also be desirable that the style should be in some degree characteristic of him, that is, that it should be terse and grave, but Schön was clever enough with his pen to know how to assume his master's style sufficiently well. The importance of such a document was in itself very great, but it lay wholly in the matter and in the name signed to the matter, scarcely at all in the style. That the name of Stein should be signed to a proposal to create a Parliament in Prussia was an event of the greatest moment in the history of the country, but in what words the proposal was expressed, so long as they were proper words, was of very trifling importance.

The Diary shows us at the same time the melancholy condition in which the Government was left by Stein's departure. His reign had been short, and the character of the Prussian Government was not such that the greatest man could in a single year reanimate public life. A Chatham might do this in England by electrifying speeches heard in an open Parliament and reported, if imperfectly, over England; but Stein, as we have seen, had scarcely any means of working on the public mind. The Emancipating Edict had indeed produced a profound impression, but such acts could not often be repeated; the Town Ordinance was the only *coup* of similar

magnitude which he had had time to strike. He had made a most promising commencement, for the 'universal enthusiasm for him' which Schön's Diary describes was precisely what no Minister before and no Minister after him—Hardenberg as little as any—was able to inspire. But it was only a commencement, and accordingly, when he departs in December, 1808, the same melancholy scene opens again as had preceded his entrance in September, 1807, with the single difference that there was then the prospect of a change for the better and now there is no such prospect. A pitiful sense of weakness overpowers the officials. Stein finds no successor. Altenstein appears to have been one of those learned theorists of whom the age was so unprecedentedly fruitful; he became in later times the principal patron of Hegel and gave to his philosophy that official stamp so all-important in Prussia. Dohna shows himself entirely helpless. Beyme, the bugbear of Stein and Hardenberg two years before, now stands out as the only Atlas that may save a sinking State. That this despondent view was not confined to Schön, but was shared by Stein himself, appears from a note of December in the Diary of the Westphalian Vincke. Stein himself had summoned him from Minden in November. He had received in Berlin the news of Stein's resignation, and had written, 'What a flood of terrible news, and among them the most wretched of all, which quite puts me off my head, Stein's retirement! In spite of his faults, which are all plainly written in the unhappy letter, he was a noble and excellent man, and as a Minister not to be replaced in the period of complete necessary transformation

of the Government.' On Dec. 7th Vincke started for Königsberg, but his carriage broke down at a place called Hochzeit. While he was waiting here who should arrive but Stein himself on his way to Berlin! Vincke notes,

I had the happiness of passing an hour with this admirable man, who drags down in the consequences of his unfortunate rashness not so much his own fortune as that of the State; but *what I heard from him in his haste made me very unhappy*, and disturbed my mind so that I regretted having begun my journey, which however he fully approved. I did not succeed in inducing him to give up the journey to Berlin. *When shall I see him again?*

He might well ask this question, for what was the object of Stein's journey to Berlin, and what were his plans for the future? We remember that in the course of the summer he had acquired a house in Berlin. His wife and daughters were now there; still we can understand that Vincke would hear with some alarm that the fallen Minister was about to repair to the town where the party which was believed to have caused his fall had its head-quarters, and where the French authorities would have him within their reach. To these considerations Stein would no doubt answer that he did not intend to remain long at Berlin, for he tells us that his intention was to take his family to Breslau, where it appears the Bishop placed a house at his disposal. It does not seem to occur to Schön—judging from his Diary—that Stein incurred any danger by going to Berlin in the character of a private person. As we have seen, the Prussian officials, confused by their strong party feelings, misunderstood Stein's position. They do not seem to imagine that Napoleon has or can have

any personal feeling against him, but suppose him to be only in danger from the malicious suggestions of the Berlin party who simply wanted his place and salary. With this view it was perhaps natural to think that he would not be persecuted further, when once he had retired into private life. But on the other hand it was evident that Napoleon, if he had some real sense of Stein's dangerousness, would not be content with depriving him of office. For how was Stein likely to employ himself in private life? He knew that a war between France and Austria was at hand. He had been engaged for some months in trying to force Prussia to take a part in this war. He was in connexion with the discontented party all over the Monarchy and hand-in-glove with Scharnhorst and Gneisenau at head-quarters. Now that the burden of civil business was off his shoulders, how was it likely that he would employ his leisure? It is easy to interpret the somewhat vague words in which he himself describes his intentions. 'My intention was to await at Breslau with my family the occurrences which were expected to take place in 1809, and *then to act according to circumstances.*' But Stein himself and his friends were surely mistaken in supposing that in the eyes of Napoleon he was a mere insect, whose movements were not worth attention. He was evidently the most considerable person both for station and character who had yet joined the slowly gathering party of European resistance. Popular risings might have little chance of 'resisting our eagles,' but at least they could give a great deal of trouble, and such a rising all over North Germany in the spring,

when Napoleon expected to have Austria on his hands, would at least be a diversion which it was desirable to prevent.

Stein's feelings at the moment of his fall are expressed in a letter to the enthusiastic Princess Wilhelm, who, apparently in despair at his retirement, had declared herself resolved to live henceforth in solitude. He entreats her not to do so, and affirms that

though the medley of pitiful passions with officious tittle-tattle is deeply disgusting, yet my latest experience has convinced me of the existence of admirable and excellent qualities, of reviving patriotism, and of readiness to sacrifice all to this principle. I have received from persons from whom I had no reason to expect it the most touching proofs of faithful devotion and love to the good cause, and to myself. Assuredly the efforts of the good and strong are not lost; it is still true that

the firm patriot...

Who made the welfare of mankind his care,
Though still by faction, vice and fortune cross'd,
Shall find the generous labour was not lost.

Cato, by Addison.

And in a postscript he goes on,

When vice prevails and impious men bear sway
The post of honour is a private station.

He found Berlin in a most critical moment of transition. By a decree of October 12th the French army in Germany had been completely transformed. The Grand Army had been dissolved, and the troops left in Germany had been reorganised under the name of the Army of the Rhine, to be commanded by Davoust. It was to consist of four divisions, one of which had its head-quarters at Stettin and fur-

nished garrisons to Stralsund, Stettin, Küstrin, and Glogau, another was placed at Magdeburg, another in Hannover, another at Halle and Halberstadt. This change involved what was called the evacuation of Prussia, and the last French troops had quitted Berlin on December 3rd, about a week before Stein arrived there. Two days before his arrival Schill at the head of his troops had entered the capital in a kind of triumph. It was assuredly a somewhat serious matter for the French ascendancy in North Germany, that within ten days Berlin should be evacuated by their troops and should be entered by Schill and by Stein. We learn little of the way Stein occupied himself after his arrival, but we are told that when Eichhorn set out for Mainz in order to receive the Prussian prisoners, which were now to be restored, he was instructed by Stein as to observations which were to be made in those parts, and was entrusted by him with confidential letters. About the same time Stein wrote as follows to the Princess Louise:

The internal administration is completely at a stand, the old official bodies dissolved and the new ones not yet formed or set in motion, while intriguers like H. v. Voss, v. Hatzfeld and the others bestir themselves on all sides and maintain themselves in the posts they hold against the declared will of the King. Not by any means a pleasing picture, but true.

Napoleon had been satisfied in 1807 with driving Hardenberg from office, but he showed his sagacity now in not allowing Stein to escape so easily. By ceasing to be Minister Stein had become in some sort more dangerous than before, for he passed over, as it were, into the secret organisations

with which as Minister he could not closely connect himself. On the other hand, he came somewhat more within the reach of Napoleon's power, for he could now be struck without inflicting so direct an insult upon the King, and through him upon Napoleon's ally, the Czar. We are told that when Eichhorn in his journey presented himself before Davoust, then called Duke of Auerstädt, and the Commander-in-chief under the new arrangement of the French forces in Germany, Davoust after referring him to his Chief of the Staff for the business on which he had come, asked him the question, 'Where is H. vom Stein?' and on Eichhorn replying that he did not know, said, 'You know well enough, but you will not say.'

In the Napoleon Correspondence appear five documents issued by the Emperor from Madrid on December 16th, 1808. He writes to his Foreign Minister, Champagny, about Frenchmen entering the Neapolitan service without his permission; to Cretet, Minister of the Interior, about a fountain at Paris; to Fouché, Minister of Police, about the disposal of the Secret Service Fund—'I have only granted 60,000 francs to the Governor of Paris; to give him more would be to throw money out of window.' Then follows a decision about a junction of Hessian troops with Polish—'no,' says Napoleon, 'Poles must be with Poles, and Germans with Germans.' Next comes a letter to 'Eugène Napoleon, Viceroy of Italy, at Milan,' enclosing a circular to the Italian bishops, which announces successes recently obtained in Spain by the valour principally of the Italian troops, and enjoins the bishops to 'sum-

mon our peoples of Italy into the holy churches to sing the Te Deum and offer the other prayers appropriate to the circumstances, and to ask of God, of Whom are all things, that he continue to bless our arms and keep from the Continent the malignant influence of the English, alike enemies of all religion and of the repose and tranquillity of all nations.'

But why is not the following document printed too, since it was signed on the same day?

DÉCRET IMPÉRIAL.

1. Le nommé Stein cherchant à exciter des troubles en Allemagne est déclaré ennemi de la France et de la Confédération du Rhin.

2. Les biens que le dit Stein posséderait soit en France soit dans les pays de la Confédération du Rhin seront séquestrés. Le dit Stein sera saisi de sa personne partout où il pourra être atteint par nos troupes ou celles de nos alliés.

En notre camp impérial de Madrid, le 16 Décembre, 1808.

(Signé) NAPOLEON.

A new French Ambassador, St Marsan, arriving at Berlin in the early days of 1809, brought this decree with him. 'He sent,' so Stein himself tells the story, 'H. v. Goldberg, an intelligent and friendly Dutchman, whose acquaintance I had made in 1808, to me with Napoleon's Decree of Proscription, and information that he had orders to break off all political relations with Prussia if he found me still in Berlin, but that if I departed at once he would regard me as already absent.'

This decree, as I have pointed out, had been hanging over Stein's head ever since September. If anything more were necessary to show that

it was not suggested to Napoleon by Prussian intriguers, but was devised independently by himself, I might point out the exceeding judiciousness if not urgent necessity of some such measure in Napoleon's interests. The struggle which awaited Napoleon in the spring was more serious than any which he had yet undergone. The submission of the Prussian King had indeed given him a great advantage; it had saved him from the imminent danger of a universal uprising of North Germany against his yoke. But such an uprising was still possible; Spain had shown in 1808 that there are cases where a nation does not wait for orders from its Government. As a matter of fact partial uprisings did take place in the spring. Schill marched out of Berlin, seized Stralsund and found his death in it, Dörnberg raised the standard of rebellion in Hessen, Brunswick made his famous march. It is not easy to believe that a man of Stein's active temperament, had that crisis found him living in freedom and honour in the bishop's palace at Breslau, would have attempted nothing. And passionless as the North Germans had hitherto shown themselves, they might at that moment have listened to the voice of Stein. That voice, as we shall see, set Prussia astir in 1813 before the King had spoken; it might have done so in 1809. And we may fairly suppose that Napoleon was not blind to the possibility.

Hitherto Stein has sacrificed nothing more in the public cause than his quiet. He has laboured indeed, and has risked his health, but the evils of the dark time have not touched him personally.

The misfortunes of Prussia have not disturbed him in the enjoyment of station, rank and property. In a moment now his prospect suffers a complete change. He is a ruined man. His estates, lying both within the territory of the Confederation of the Rhine, the one at Nassau, and the other in the Duchy of Warsaw, could not be protected for a moment from the tyrant. His official salary had been lost before. And he was not like other ruined men, who can at least try again; the earthly omnipotence that had decreed his ruin would be watchful to forbid his retrieving it.

But he was not merely ruined, he was also in extreme personal danger. According to Niebuhr Napoleon wanted Stein's life, and the forbearance which allowed him time to escape was due to St Marsan personally, whom the King afterwards rewarded for it. That he was in Prussia, a country in which Napoleon had no legal authority, would not protect him; he himself makes the remark that the order for his arrest ran in Prussia as well as in the territories of the Rhine Confederation. The Decree says distinctly that he 'is to be seized wherever our troops'—not have a right to seize him but—'*can* seize him.' And it seems that at all the stations of the French Army of the Rhine, at Erfurt, Magdeburg, Hamburg, Hannover, &c., this Decree was posted up, and thousands who in the political quietism of those days had known nothing of any Prussian Minister who was unlike other officials, now read of 'the person called Stein,' whom the great Napoleon, just as if the name Stein were not extremely common in Germany, supposed to be so

universally known that he did not even add any description or address to assist the agents of his imperial justice. When two years before Frederick William's anger flashed out upon Stein as hastily as Napoleon's now, a friend said to him, 'Now you belong to history!' If that letter from the King put Stein into Prussian history, Napoleon's decree introduced him in a moment into the history of Europe; it made his name a household word in Germany, and his biographer Pertz remembers that he himself, a boy of thirteen, then heard it for the first time. But assuredly the celebrity was as terrible as it was sudden and universal.

There was no time to lose. As through the whole period we see that the Prussian officials look either to France or else to Russia, Stein instantly thought of the Czar. He wrote to the King, begging that he would apply to Alexander for his intercession with Napoleon and at the same time asking permission to enter the Russian service. On January 5th he saw his friends for the last time, Sack, Kunth, and others, and in the night set out upon his lonely wanderings, comforted perhaps by the words of a certain officer, v. Röder, who said to him, 'The French have robbed you of your inheritance; we Prussians must recover it with our blood!'

PART VI.

STEIN IN EXILE.

Alas! what boots the long laborious quest
Of moral prudence sought through good and ill;
Or pains abstruse to elevate the will
And lead us on to that transcendent rest
Where every passion shall the sway attest
Of Reason seated on her sovereign hill;
What is it but a vain and curious skill
If sapient Germany must lie deprest
Beneath the brutal sword? Her haughty schools
Shall blush; and may not we with sorrow say,
A few strong instincts and a few plain rules
Among the herdsmen of the Alps, have wrought
More for mankind at this unhappy day
Than all the pride of intellect and thought?

WORDSWORTH.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST RISING OF GERMANY.

THE outlaw had only a few hours grace, and was obliged to set out 'not knowing whither he went,' but desiring only to escape beyond the range of the French army. He determined to cross into Bohemia, though he could not yet know whether the Austrian Government was disposed to give him shelter. It was in the night of the 5th of January that he set out. He went by Sagan, and on the next day to Bunzlau. Then in a sledge to Löwenberg, and after a little sleep he started again at one in the morning; and Pertz describes, I suppose from Stein's own mouth, the beauty of the night and the thoughts that occupied his mind. It seems that he called to mind a New Year's sermon of Schleiermacher's 'On what a man should fear and what is not to be feared.' On the morning of the 9th he presented himself to his old friends, the Redens, at Buchwald in the Riesengebirge. They were much astonished, but welcomed him warmly. French soldiers, however, were still within

a few miles, and it was necessary to form further plans. Next day came letters from Berlin; his wife sent a passport which she had procured from the Austrian Ambassador, and begged him to cross the frontier at once; she would follow with the children wherever he might appoint. He replied, begging her to come, as soon as her health would allow it, to Prag. He then wrote a letter to Dalberg, who was now Prince Primate of the Confederation of the Rhine, asking for the help of his influence towards saving the Nassau property for his family, and procured an English passport under the name of Carl Frücht (Frücht, it will be remembered, is the name of the estate near Nassau where he now lies buried). It is pleasant to read that an old friend of his youth sought him out at Buchwald, expressly in order to share his trials; and it is also pleasant that, from a description by the poet Arndt, we are able to picture to ourselves this faithful friend, and the kind of chat with which they cheered each other in the snowy days when they crossed the Bohemian mountains together. His name was Count Gessler; and

He was (writes Arndt) a friend of Körner and Schiller; his acquirements, his intelligence and wit could not but be extolled by all who knew him; his German heart and noble devout spirit I was to learn more and more to appreciate till the day of his death. He was an early friend of Stein's and knew how to play with him as no one else did; indeed, Stein would not have allowed anyone else to play with him so. Stein loved and esteemed him much, and yet their talk was an eternal quarrelling and carping. No doubt that is often a way with people who have had merry days together in youth; partly from habit, partly for remembrance sake. In this petty teasing and carping, Gessler, more quiet and more witty, had generally the better; he knew how to play with the lion like a gadfly who bites his muzzle till

he roars again ; it amused him to awake for a moment the wrath of the Titan, to whose might and greatness nevertheless he paid due homage.

A little chafing of this kind may have been really beneficial, for their journey over the mountains was very cold. In fact, so much snow fell that a day later they would have found it impossible to pass, but they reached Trautenau in safety, and from this place Stein wrote to two of the Austrian Ministers, Count Stadion, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, and Count O'Donnell of Tyrconnel, Minister for Finance. He asked that the Emperor would grant him an asylum in his State, where he proposed to live in retirement and devote himself to the education of his children. On the 16th he reached Prag; here soon received encouraging unofficial answers to his application, which were followed on January 24th by an official communication from Stadion, expressing the Emperor's pleasure at receiving within his States a Minister equally distinguished for the services he had rendered to his Sovereign and for the misfortunes they had drawn upon him, but at the same time the Emperor's desire that he would choose Brünn, the capital of Moravia, for his residence rather than Prag, which was full of Prussian refugees, generally estimable but often injudicious persons, who would not allow him to enjoy the quiet he sought. Stadion added that he personally was glad to have Stein within a short journey of Vienna, rather than so far off as he would be at Prag.

Stein accordingly proceeded to Brünn, still accompanied by Gessler, who did not leave him till

the latter part of February. On March 1st arrived the Frau vom Stein and the daughters. On the back of the letter in which the wife announced her coming is to be read, according to Pertz, in Stein's hand, the well-known lines from Schiller's Bell, then of course a poem of the day—quotations from Goethe and Schiller are rare in Stein's letters—:

Einen Blick
Nach dem Grabe
Seiner Habe
Sendet noch der Mensch zurück—
Greift fröhlich dann zum Wanderstabe ;
Was Feuers Wuth ihm auch geraubt,
Ein süßer Trost ist ihm geblieben ;
Er zählt die Häupter seiner Lieben
Und sieh' ihm fehlt kein theures Haupt.

Adversity even thus early began to produce its compensations. His wife, who had, I imagine, nothing either of patriotic or political heroism, now displayed the heroism of duty, and Stein began to feel a passionate gratitude to her for the perfect devotion with which she clung to him in his misfortunes.

During his short stay at Prag he had renewed an acquaintance formed long before with the most remarkable public man then living in the Austrian empire, Gentz, the Burke of Germany. The day before the Emperor's directions reached Stein, Gentz wrote to him as follows :

All those who still know on what road salvation and preservation are to be found, though they have long abandoned the hope that they will be sought on it, look up to your Excellency as the Patriarch and Supreme Head of their Church ; in this light at least I and those who think with me have regarded you for several years

past, and the last occurrences have set the seal to our belief. And for my part I hereby declare that if I could this day procure to be given to your Excellency the Dictatorship (in strict Old-Roman sense of the word) over all which would need to be undertaken for the redemption of Germany, I would leave the world to-morrow satisfied with my day's work and at ease with respect to the issue and the future.

In the next act of the European drama Stein does not appear upon the stage. For the next three years his name was forgotten, and probably few people knew what had become of the active and conspicuous Minister of 1808. But it is not till the end of the year which opened with his flight that his influence upon the course of affairs ceases to be felt. The great German war of 1809 was the event for which in the last months of his Ministry he had been preparing, and in the incidents of it we can plainly trace his influence. We see efforts ending in feebleness and failure, because he was absent who might have given unity to them. But in these abortive efforts is foreshadowed much which in 1813 was successfully accomplished under Stein's guidance. Upon this war then we must delay for a moment.

From the German point of view it resembles the war of 1813, except in being unsuccessful. Like that, it is a War of Liberation. It is conducted in a similar spirit of patriotism, a spirit as unlike as possible to that in which the wars of 1805 and 1806 had been waged, and since Russia stood aloof it was even more thoroughly national than the war of 1813, or than any German war except that of 1870. In one respect it is unique. Owing to the King of Prussia's decision and to the fall of Stein Prussia

has no share in it, so that this once Austria really heads the German nationality, and for a time she shows a spirit and heroism by which she seems likely finally to eclipse her rival. This is the year of the Acts of Austria. Like Agamemnon she exerts herself to compensate for the absence of Achilles. But Jove is against her, as against Agamemnon, and she goes limping away to her tent.

We have seen that the Minister for Foreign Affairs, that is the leading Minister in Austria at the time when Stein sought an asylum there, was Count Philipp Stadion. This statesman's character and career present a remarkable parallel to those of Stein. Like Stein he was of a very old family, an Imperial Knight, though with the title of Count, not Baron. Like Stein, it is curious to observe, he had taken the birthright from his elder brother, the first-born, Friedrich, having embraced the ecclesiastical life. Like Stein he had been at the University of Göttingen and, being only six years younger, must have had much the same set of University friends. He had been a witness of the enthusiasm of the members of the Hainbund and seems to have shared it somewhat more than Stein did, though less than his brother Friedrich. His character was strongly marked, and marked with much the same traits as that of Stein. He was proud and downright, capable of grasping great ideas and of retaining them firmly. His Imperial Knighthood gave to him, as to Stein, a feeling of independence in the presence of sovereigns, and as he claimed to be something in himself and not to owe everything to the favour of a prince, so like

Stein he expected others to have individuality, and despised all mere courtiers or mere officials. What difference there was between the two men was caused by Stadion having chosen the career which for a man of his birth was natural, while Stein by a sudden resolution had thrown himself into a different course. Stadion had chosen the service of Austria and the department of diplomacy; Stein, as we have seen, had attached himself to Prussia, and had declined the diplomatic career. Had it been otherwise, Stein might have had almost precisely the position in history of Stadion, and even in the service of Prussia Stein, with the training of a diplomatist instead of that of a local administrator and financier, would have been perhaps no more than a Prussian Stadion, that is, he would have been a Minister above the average in energy and the power of rousing the national spirit, but he would have left no monument of himself in durable reforms, and the sum of his work would have been honourable failure instead of solid success.

Stadion like Stein had been called to the head of affairs at a moment of disaster; as Stein after the Peace of Tilsit, so Stadion after the Peace of Pressburg. In general he worked on the same lines. He had the same idea of calling in the people to co-operate with the Government, and as his Ministry began nearly two years before that of Stein, he may certainly claim to have set the example to Stein rather than to have imitated him. The official style of Austria in his time had an elevation very unusual in the country of Thugut, Cobenzl and Metternich. The following is a specimen:

In future it will be necessary that the noble intellectual endowments which belong to the different nations of the Austrian Empire should be developed and enriched with acquirements of every kind by a better education, better organised schools, greater freedom of the Press, and unimpeded use of the treasures of culture offered by other nations; slumbering or cramped talents must be encouraged, timid merit brought forward, by which means assuredly the number of great men will soon be augmented, of whom the Sovereign has need, &c., &c.

But Stadion contented himself with giving a better tone to Austrian politics. He was no Reformer. He had neither himself noted the shortcomings, which surely were many, of the Austrian organisation, nor devised better methods, nor did he readily take up suggestions of reform made by others. He had held all the principal diplomatic posts. He knew the Court of Stockholm, that of London, that of Berlin, and that of St Petersburg, but all the experience he had acquired thus had not given him, as it was not calculated to give him, any new light upon the internal needs of Austria. And this deficiency spoiled his destiny, though it did not make his character less elevated and admirable. Our own ambassador, Adair, writes, 'I can never speak of that excellent Minister without the highest respect for his honourable character and frankness, and without lasting gratitude for his kindness to myself.' But in history he appears only as a Stein *manqué*; Austria does not look back to his Ministry as the commencement of a better order of things, but as an honourable though melancholy period when she struggled for a moment to rise out of her degradation, only to fall back disappointed, sacrifice an archduchess to Napoleon,

and commit herself blindfold for a whole generation to the guidance of Metternich.

Austria's great need being precisely the same as Prussia's, namely, military force to withstand a threatening enemy, it was natural that in both countries the ablest soldier should assume an exceptional position and divide with the Minister the direction of affairs. Accordingly the Archduke Charles holds in Austria a position corresponding to that of Scharnhorst in Prussia, as Stadion one corresponding to that of Stein. Of all the leading commanders of that period the Archduke Charles was the youngest. He was younger than Napoleon himself and than Wellington. And yet he had led an army to victory in 1794, that is, many years before Wellington's name was heard of in European war and two years before Napoleon rose to supreme command. In 1796 the admiration of the world was divided between him and Napoleon, when he contended with such leaders as Jourdan and Moreau and drove them both across the Rhine. Again, in the first year of the second war, in 1799, he won over Jourdan the battles of Osterach and Stockach. Employed in Italy in the disastrous year 1805, and entirely unconcerned in the disgraces of Ulm and Austerlitz, he had as yet lost nothing of the renown which those early successes had procured him. On the 10th of February, 1806, that is almost immediately after the Peace of Pressburg, the Emperor, against his inclination, but constrained as the King of Prussia so soon afterwards was to send for Stein, created him Generalissimus of all the Austrian

armies, giving him at the same time the position of War Minister and President of the War Board. Such powers were quite exceptional in the Austrian system, in which hitherto even the ablest generals, and none more than the Archduke himself, had been hampered in their operations by the dictation of this very Board of War.

No one perhaps had held so proud a position in the Austrian State since Eugene. It might seem that much more was to be expected from him than from Scharnhorst in a similar position. The Archduke was only 34 years old, and his reputation was not, like that of Scharnhorst, mainly the reputation of a military author and lecturer. A military theorist indeed he was, but he was also a laurelled general surpassed in fame at this time by Napoleon alone. And while Scharnhorst had to bear up not only against the disadvantage of having won no victories, but also against that of his low extraction and his foreign birth, the Archduke, as a Habsburg, was at home in his command and had all the authority which belonged to so many famous commanders of the old regime, to Gustavus, Condé, Charles XII., Frederick, the authority conferred by belonging to the royal caste. The Archduke could not but adopt measures similar to those of Scharnhorst, for the great idea which marks the period of the Anti-Napoleonic Revolution, the idea of a popular army, was in the air, and to imitate the Spaniards was the dream of war-politicians in all countries alike.

Armies were to cease to be mere machines, and were to acquire in addition to the force that comes of regularity that which comes of vitality; to discipline

they were to add spirit, and to have a sense of liberty as well as a sense of control. This reform divided itself into two parts. One part, and that the principal, consisted in establishing a connexion between the army and the people, in presenting military service no longer as a mere skilled labour undertaken for pay, but as a duty of the citizen to his country to be performed with free loyalty and zeal. Another and more obvious part consisted in treating the soldier considered as a mere hireling in a more rational manner. The private would certainly fight better if he were kindly treated than if he were treated brutally. The officer would certainly be more serviceable if he were better taught, and if he had a prospect of promotion in proportion to his merit. It was this latter reform which the Archduke undertook first, and he seems to have been as much impressed as any great reformer ever was with the necessity and importance of the changes to be made. 'No intellectual principle,' he writes, 'balanced the dead mechanism of a drill pressed upon them in pure geometry.' And his favourite, Count Grünne, exclaims, 'What could possibly come of the methodical course of our military administration?—of our school-boy responsibility, of the Economy Commissions which ruin us, the Commissariats which starve us, our book-keeping which is always wrong, our Boards of Control to find who steals least, our Council of War that never gives any counsel, our Bureaucracy that presses us to the earth?' Accordingly in three years between the Peace of Pressburg and the Campaign of Wagram the Archduke carried on a process of purification

which consisted in dismissing incompetent officers, who had come in under the old corrupt system of favouritism, in establishing new schools for the training of officers, in encouraging the study of military science, particularly by the method to which we have seen that Scharnhorst attached so much importance, viz., the publication and circulation of military journals, and in issuing Drill Regulations in which a kindly and rational treatment of the private soldier was earnestly recommended. The great effects of this reform were plainly visible, as is admitted by the harshest critics of the Archduke, in the Campaign of 1809, in which it was plainly not good fighting but good leadership that was wanting on the Austrian side.

But the Archduke went further and risked the great innovation of creating a citizen army. While he was occupied with organizing a reserve to garrison the towns of the interior in case of an invasion, the suggestion of a Landwehr was dropped by some one, perhaps by the Archduke John, and from the end of 1807 we find that this scheme is under consideration. In March, 1808, a draught plan is laid before the Emperor. Late in May the Provincial Governors and Military Commissioners are summoned to Vienna to discuss it under the presidency of the Archduke John, and finally on the 9th of June, that is, near the end of Stein's Ministry, the Patent appeared by which the Austrian Landwehr was called into existence.

It consisted of the men between nineteen and forty-five not otherwise liable to military service. There were many exemptions, and substitutes were

allowed. On Sundays and holidays there was to be drill in each parish. In time of peace it was to be subject to no other authority than that of the local magistracy; in time of war an oath was to be administered, and the force was then to be placed under the authority of the commanding general, and to be united with the reserve army for defence of the fatherland. All men not included either in the army or the Landwehr were to be enrolled in a citizen force for purposes of police. The Archduke calculated that by this means he could count upon a reserve force of 240,000 in addition to troops of the line amounting to 300,000.

Thus the Landwehr came into existence in Austria earlier by several years than in Prussia. The war which followed in the next year, and which, when Stein came into Austria, was on the point of breaking out, receives a special character from the great military changes which had preceded it. It is unlike the three great wars which Austria had waged before against revolutionary France, those of 1792—1797, 1798—1801 and 1805, and on the other hand it is like the great German war of 1813. For the year of transition, 1808, is past, and the Anti-Napoleonic Revolution has begun. The war of 1809 is the first effort made to resist Napoleon in the strength of the Spanish principle of popular war.

Had this effort been successful, or had Napoleon come out of the war of 1809 with only a slight superiority, the consequences would have been incalculable. Not merely would the Russian Expedition in all probability have never taken place, and so the whole later course of Napoleon would have been

different, but Austria's position with respect to Prussia and Germany would perhaps have been at this day quite unlike what it is. I have already quoted Stein's judgment about Austria at this time, and pointed out that he seems to have given it a decided preference over Prussia. Had Austria had the good fortune to give Napoleon the first decisive check, her superiority to Prussia would perhaps have been established for good. And, moreover, had she met with this success under the guidance of the high-minded Count Stadion, and through the operation of the liberal military policy of the Archduke Charles, she would have found herself the representative of popular principles in Europe. For, since the Spanish discovery of the military resource to be found in popular enthusiasm had been appropriated by the opponents of Napoleon, popular principles, from which Napoleon for his part had finally severed himself in 1804, had become the watchword of his enemies. Accordingly in 1809 it was the cry of all Napoleonists that Austria had become a revolutionary Power. The King of Bavaria in his manifesto complains of the insidious proclamations of the Austrians, 'which assail the rights of sovereigns and seek to diffuse a reckless spirit calculated to undermine civil order.' In similar language the King of Würtemberg complains of 'the demagogic principles announced by Austria in commencing the war.' Had these principles led Austria to victory it would have been difficult for her afterwards to repudiate them, and had the government been disposed to do so they would have been rooted in the people. That principle which

made the rising against Napoleon the germ of a political revolution in almost every state, the principle, namely, that the citizens who have saved the State by their self-sacrifice in the field have a right to political liberty, would have worked more irresistibly in Austria than elsewhere and would have made her foremost rather than hindmost in the movement of emancipation.

Such, then, was Austria at this crisis. She was animated by a fine spirit, she had a high-hearted Minister and a renowned General. Still it was evident that by herself she was no match for Napoleon. If she had succumbed in 1805, though aided by Russia and hoping to be aided by Prussia with her resources then unimpaired, what chance had she now, with Russia hostile, Prussia crushed, and the third part of Germany thoroughly organised under Napoleon's protectorate in the Confederation of the Rhine? Evidently she could not be justified in taking up arms except on the Spanish principle of reliance on popular feeling. But if she adopted this principle, what additional resources could she gain from it?

First, though Frederick William had decided for inaction, there was still a chance of obtaining the help of Prussia, for the Prussians might take the initiative out of the hands of their Government, as the Spaniards had done, and as the Prussians actually did in 1813. Schill, at least, was pretty sure to move, and if he did so, what more likely than that Blücher should, by some sudden act, set the army in a flame, and that Scharnhorst, by his influence at the King's ear, should bring over the Government?

It would be easy in that case for Stein to cross the frontier again, and then all the mishaps of the autumn would be repaired and the War Party would be reinstated in power.

Secondly, as Prussia might be brought over, so perhaps the Confederation of the Rhine might be to a good degree neutralised, by a popular movement. It was indeed hardly possible to appeal to German patriotism, for such a feeling was almost unknown, but there existed strong local attachments and feelings of loyalty to particular princely houses. Upon the nucleus of the Confederation in the South-West indeed such levers could not be used, except in the Tirol, but in the North-West, where several sovereigns had been expelled, they might be effective. It might indeed fairly be thought possible entirely to overturn the Napoleonic Kingdom of Westphalia. Part of this had formerly belonged to Prussia, and thus Jerome's service was full of soldiers who had formerly belonged to the army of Frederick William and officers who were under the personal influence of Scharnhorst and Gneisenau. Another part had formerly composed the Electorate of Hessen, and another that of Hannover, where English influence might be expected to be strong. It was understood that a great expedition was preparing in England, and it was natural to suppose that the attention of England would be principally directed to Hannover. We may here remark that Stein's interest was strongly concentrated on this part of Germany. He was a Westphalian in feeling, and believed himself to be gratefully remembered in that part of the old Prussian Monarchy. By his connexions he was at

home in Hannover; and lastly, his sister Marianne was living, and exerting an influence something similar to his own, at Homberg in Hessen. Putting all these considerations together, it might still seem reasonable to look forward to a successful War of German Liberation in 1809, and to suppose that Austria's Declaration would be followed by a general rising in North Germany, the timidity of the Government being overcome by the energy of the population and of the military leaders—and what leaders had appeared in Spain comparable to Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, and Blücher?—that Jerome's throne would totter, and that, as in Spain, the national rising would be sustained and consolidated by an English army.

Of all this little was realised. In Prussia Schill alone stirred, and he flung away his life in vain. The outbreak in Hessen was almost immediately put down, and Brunswick could do nothing but fight his way to the sea. The English expedition was wasted upon the coast of Holland. The Austrians faltered in striking their first blow, and though they afterwards brought Napoleon near to destruction at Aspern, and though their peasant war in the Tirol added one of the most heart-stirring chapters to European history, yet in the end they signed a Peace which was their Tilsit, and they have never since risen to a position at all like that which, under Stadion, they momentarily occupied. For us it is still more disappointing to find that Stein remains inactive through the whole year, though he was eager to be employed, and that his biography during this year would be almost a blank, if we did

not allow his sister's adventures at Homberg to find a place in it.

The main causes of so vast a failure seem to have been the mismanagement of the Austrian leaders, particularly of the Archduke Charles, who in this, the great opportunity of his life, completely disappointed expectation, and next the faulty design of our Walcheren expedition, which was wrongly timed and wrongly directed. But perhaps the fatal mistake of the campaign was in its commencement. German enthusiasm needed to be inflamed by some degree of success at the outset, and apparently Napoleon, by delaying his arrival, had laid his army open to the Austrian attack. But the Archduke did nothing, and the consequence was that the first insurrections in North Germany were damped just at the moment of explosion by the news that the war had begun with a decisive success on the part of the French, and that the Archduke was in full flight for Bohemia. The famous five-days contest in Bavaria (April 19th—23rd) corresponds exactly in time to the Westphalian rising headed by Dörnberg, which began on April 22nd, and the tidings of Napoleon's victory were already spread over Germany when Schill marched out of Berlin. Thus the first act of the play falls in the latter half of April.

On May 13th Napoleon enters Vienna, and now, in the great battle of May 21st and 22nd, fortune goes over to the German side. At Aspern Napoleon suffered a greater check than he had ever experienced, a defeat which, if he himself had commanded the Austrian army, would have become a destruction. Meanwhile the Black Legion of Brunswick had

marched into Saxony and caused the King to flee from Dresden. On May 31st occurs the catastrophe and death of Schill at Stralsund.

The impression produced by the Battle of Aspern and the inaction of Napoleon from the time of his disaster until his passage of the Danube on July 4th, might seem to open a new prospect to the German insurrection. But the Archduke shows himself more incapable than before of seizing an advantage, and Prussia, though she shows signs of stirring, yet takes no decisive step. In June, however, Brunswick pursues a victorious career in Saxony, and there are new risings in Hessen.

Fortune now changes her side again, and Napoleon wins the Battle of Wagram (July 5th and 6th). This victory, like that of Friedland in the former war, proves decisive, though it did not at first appear to be so. It is followed on July 12th by the Armistice of Znaim. On July 31st the Archduke resigns his command. Everything now depends on the conduct of England. Her expedition has not yet set sail. Had it landed on the northern coast of Germany about the time of the Battle of Aspern, a real War of German Liberation would certainly have opened. Even now the Germans look wistfully to see what direction it will take. On July 24th Brunswick, marching out of Zwickau, declares his intention of fighting his way to the North Sea in order to put himself in connexion with the English.

But a decisive mistake was now made by the English Government. Always unable to conceive German affairs, uninformed perhaps of the earnestness and influence of the war-party in Prussia or, it

may be, taking the fall of Stein for a proof that the country was not ripe for insurrection, they were deaf to the calls of Germany, though Count Stadion assured them that from 12 to 15,000 men disembarked at the mouth of the Weser would undoubtedly suffice for the nucleus of a *levée en masse* of North Germany, and sent their great expedition, 40,000 men and 144 pieces of artillery, in the latter half of July, to the Scheld.

Meanwhile Napoleon has augmented his army by 80,000 men and Austria begins to feel her inability to renew the war. She does not want patriotism nor men; what she wants is intelligent government and leadership. The war has deprived her of her trusted leader, for no reputation of that age suffered so disastrous an eclipse as that of the Archduke Charles after the campaign of 1809. It has somewhat recovered its lustre since, owing partly to the popular remembrance of the Battle of Aspern, partly to the desire of the Austrians to be represented in the history of the great wars by some General who might be compared to Napoleon, Wellington, and Blücher; but, 'in the autumn of 1809,' we are told, 'Mack and the Archduke Charles stood about upon a level in public estimation¹.' And hence the reflexion was made by a leading Austrian, that 'if Austria could put a million of men into the field she must still despair, for she had no leader to entrust them to.'

Peace was signed on October 14th. It was such a Peace to Austria as that of Tilsit had been to Prussia. She surrendered territory with a population of 3,500,000, she lost all her frontiers, and was

¹ Springer, *Geschichte Oesterreichs*.

left open to invasion on every side; she lost her access to the sea, she promised an indemnity of 85,000,000 francs, she acceded to the Continental system, she engaged to reduce her army to 150,000 men. Absolutely these conditions did not reduce her so much or bring her so near to destruction as Prussia had been brought, but relatively to her former greatness they were almost as unfavourable. As a Great Power Austria ceased to exist, and there was this circumstance of hopelessness about her fall, that she had tried the last known remedy, had played the last card, and failed.

The disasters of Prussia might be retrieved by reforms like those of Stein and Scharnhorst, but Austria had had her Stein and her Scharnhorst, and the result was a new failure. For we must not allow our knowledge of the turn of fortune which happened within so few years to influence our conception of the prospects of Austria at the end of 1809. At that time no hope remained to her that was founded on calculation. A moral despair had set in. Stadion went and Metternich came; Marie Louise was sacrificed. *Te colui, virtus, ut rem, at tu nomen inane es!* had become the maxim of Austria. Accordingly in 1813 she is no longer what she was in 1809; her policy has reverted to the type of the Thuguts and the Cobenzls, and she watches the fall of the tyrant without enthusiasm, only anxious to make her own advantage of it and to avoid committing herself to those popular principles which in 1809 she had been blamed for adopting.

Such, in outline, is the history of the war which Stein, who had long looked forward to taking a

leading share in it, was condemned to watch in complete inaction. Why he was not employed we cannot tell; one would think that the Emperor of Austria might have used his energy and commanding influence in North Germany in 1809, as the Emperor of Russia, we shall see, used them in 1813. Perhaps it was mere negligence, or perhaps—for Stadion's popular principles by no means actuated the Austrian Government as a whole—it may have been a dread of encouraging the people to act for themselves. But there is scarcely any chapter of Stein's life on which we have so little information. We learn that in February he sent to Count Stadion a Report on the Position of Prussia, which was read by the Minister with much interest, but which led to nothing. We learn that Vienna society rang with his praises, and that a pamphlet which he was expected to publish in explanation of his dismissal and proscription, was so eagerly awaited that Vienna booksellers had sold beforehand several hundreds of orders at two gulden apiece; so that Stein was obliged to make a formal announcement that he contemplated no such publication. And yet Stein was not invited by the Minister to Vienna and did not receive permission to reside there until Count Stadion had left for head-quarters. The only explanation ever given of this neglect is contained in a letter written by Gentz on April 17th, and runs as follows :

Though I can only give here a small part of what is required for the full explanation of this affair, yet I must at least throw upon it what light circumstances allow. The real cause of my silence was perplexity, and that was caused by the perplexity of

another, who by the way is one of the most excellent men of the time. When the expectations from Prussia became fainter and at last seemed to disappear, an anxiety—exaggerated in my opinion—began to be felt lest it should be indelicate in the circumstances to give your Excellency a formal invitation to Vienna; and in spite of all I could do to combat this scruple, it struck such root that I was no longer able, in spite of unceasing endeavours, to ripen the resolution. Had your Excellency on your side contrived to do anything which might have brought the matter to a point, I should have been much sooner delivered from a state of perplexity which was very painful to me. As it was, however, I doubted whether you would really be gratified by an invitation to Vienna, and so my perplexity was heightened.

Against the charge conveyed in this last sentence, Stein vindicated himself on April 20th as follows :

My position in this country did not, in my opinion, entitle me to take such a step as you mention. An asylum had been granted to me as an outlaw, a particular place of residence had been assigned to me, but not the slightest intention had been expressed of entering into relations with me, either by conversation, or correspondence, or any other conceivable way, or of doing anything else for me but to allow me fire and water. I wrote on February 24th my views on the position of Prussia, but the paper remained unanswered. You indeed repeated several times that they were eager to see me at Vienna, but you always held out hopes of a further and more definite declaration, and as this did not follow I was confirmed in my opinion that my situation imperatively required that I should be quiet, and not play the importunate, tiresome, busy-idle part of an emigré aiming at restoration. I had a vivid recollection of the old French emigration, which taught me plainly that the more rational members of it, for instance, Marshal De Castries and General Bouillé, when they saw that they were (not?) wanted, withdrew themselves altogether, since an uncalled-for interference in an opposite sense is useless and degrading.

He adds, with respect to the King of Prussia,

The King is confirmed in his obstinate irresolution by his

friend Alexander and by the danger of the enterprise, and I fear it will cost his councillors a great deal to bring him to another mind.

That this letter is almost the only utterance of Stein between the commencement of the war and the battle of Wagram is not so surprising as it is disappointing. As soon as Napoleon's first successes transferred the war into the heart of Austria, Stein's position began to be once more dangerous, and as precisely those occurrences which interested him most increased his danger, he probably found it imprudent to write letters. His name was brought again before the public by that Westphalian insurrection which broke out a few days after the date of the above letter.

His unfortunate letter to Wittgenstein had not only spoken in general terms of discontent in the kingdom of Westphalia, but it had named a particular part of the kingdom, the former Electorate of Hessen. This reference seemed particularly significant when it was considered that Wittgenstein was closely connected with the expelled Elector; in fact, the only motive which can be thought to have led Stein to hold intercourse with Wittgenstein was precisely his connexion with an Elector in whose name an insurrection was preparing in Hessen. It might seem, therefore, to throw a sudden light upon that letter when the name of Stein's sister was published to the world among the persons implicated in the rising which took place in Hessen in the latter part of the month of April.

At Homberg, on the Werra, and at this time

within the prefecture of Marburg, there was a Foundation for Single Ladies (Fräulein-Stift), which had been founded by a lady of the House of Wallenstein. It admitted only ladies who could show sixteen noble descents. The house had at this time only three actual inmates (though there were 13 members of the Foundation), Abbess v. Gilsa, Deaness vom Stein, and Canoness v. Metzsch. But it appears that the Foundation formed a nucleus of a larger female society which had been drawn by its attraction to Homberg. Of this society Marianne vom Stein is said to have been the ruling spirit. Count Senfft, the husband of her niece, describes her as follows :

She was a person of a remarkable character, with a strong but most enthusiastic mind. Disgraced by nature, she had led a life retired from the world, which had given an eccentric turn alike to her imagination and to her manners. With much simplicity of character she exerted over those around her the ascendant of a superior intelligence, and conducted alone and successfully the affairs of her chapter. Madame de Senfft (daughter of Louise vom Stein) valued her for her great qualities ; she had visited her at Homberg at the time of her first journey to France in 1806. But since that time her political enthusiasm had shown itself (Count Senfft was a Gallicising politician) and, combined with a physical disorder, seemed likely to hurry her into some extravagance.

The leader of the Westphalian insurrection also, Dörnberg, though not connected personally with Stein, was under the influence of the Prussian war-party. He had served in the Prussian army, ranked Scharnhorst and Gneisenau among his friends, and tells us expressly that Prussian officers with messages from Scharnhorst came to him often about

this time. He also tells us that he had been induced to return to his native Hessen after quitting the Prussian service by that 'fundamental idea of the Tugendbund, the idea of maintaining the German spirit under the foreign domination, and that every one must labour to this end in his own special Fatherland.' 'Nevertheless,' he adds, 'I refused to become formally a member of the Bund, because I wished to remain free and had an aversion to secret associations.' We can well believe that when Stein wrote his letter to Wittgenstein he had this very Dörnberg in his thoughts and, remembering at the same time his own sister, pictured not merely in general disturbances in Hessen, but almost precisely such a rising as now took place.

What made such a rising likely to be formidable was that it would be military. The discontented of North Germany, who received secret instructions from Scharnhorst through Count Chasot's committee at Berlin, were principally soldiers. Dörnberg himself was a Colonel of Chasseurs in the Westphalian service, high in the confidence of the government against which he conspired. It was on April 22nd that the tocsin sounded along the valleys of the Schwalm and Diemel, and the peasantry assembled in masses while Dörnberg was still in Cassel. He was so little suspected that he received orders to lead two companies to the protection of the palace. But receiving, while he executed this order, intelligence which led him to think himself betrayed, he gave up his command to another, and hurried to Homberg to join the insurgents, who now numbered some thousands. It appears that on his arrival he

went straight to the house of the Foundation, and there deliberated with the leaders of the insurrection. They determined to march upon Cassel, and set out in the night. When they took their departure, Caroline v. Baumbach, not a member of the Foundation but one of that larger female society above described, presented Dörnberg with a red and white banner, bearing the motto, 'Sieg oder Tod im Kampfe für das Vaterland.'

On the way Dörnberg's force was met at Kirchbaun, not far from Cassel, by the Government troops. He hoped to win them to his cause, but was met with an overwhelming discharge of musketry, before which his followers, but half-armed and undisciplined, did not hold their ground a moment. The insurrection was at an end, and Dörnberg with difficulty made his way back to Homberg, whence he escaped into Bohemia. He was reserved to play a gallant part in the War of Liberation, and then enjoyed the blessing of the Psalmist, 'to see his children's children and peace upon Israel,' for he lived till 1850.

A few days later police officials appeared at Homberg with orders to arrest the three resident ladies and take possession of their papers. They were conducted under a military escort to Cassel and placed in a common prison, where, we are told, they were hardly treated. They were charged with having worked the banner and with having subscribed 3000 thalers towards the insurrection. An Edict of the Westphalian Government proceeded at once to dissolve the Foundation and confiscate its property, which amounted to 451,000 thalers. On

May 18th, Fräulein vom Stein was brought to trial along with the Canoness v. Metzsch. It seems that they denied everything, and in particular that Marianne declared that she had had no correspondence with her brother since he had become Minister in October, 1807. Senfft says that she displayed a remarkable firmness of bearing. Two days later they received orders through a gendarme to make themselves ready to start for Mainz in an hour and a half. On May 23rd they arrived at Mainz, travelling with one gendarme in the carriage and another on the box. On the 25th Marianne received notice that she must travel by herself to Paris, where she arrived ill and miserable on June 6th. Fortunately, her niece and Count Senfft were at Paris, Senfft being Saxon Ambassador at the French Court, and Marianne was able to apprise them of her condition. Senfft hurried to Fouché and asked permission to receive Marianne in his house on condition of becoming responsible for her. He found that Fouché knew nothing about the case, but was willing to use his interest with Napoleon, who was then absent, in support of the request, and in the meanwhile to alleviate the prisoner's condition as far as possible. Marianne was lodged at the prefecture of police, and the Senffts found her a servant. Soon they were able to transfer her to a hospital subject to the inspection of the police, then by constant applications they gained permission to give her airings in a carriage, and at last to receive her in their house on the condition that she was to live in strict privacy. Senfft also distributed hush-money among the Westphalian police. He was afterwards able to

take her with him to Saxony, where she joined her sister Louise, then living at Leipzig.

I am obliged to tell this story rather vaguely, because the versions of it in Pertz, Senfft and Lyncker's History of the Westphalian Insurrection, offer so many discrepancies. In particular I am embarrassed by the attempt of Pertz to represent Marianne as a purely innocent sufferer. The reader, when he is told of her powerful character and of the dangerous political enthusiasm which animated her, will assume as a matter of course that she did all she could to help Dörnberg, that she subscribed all the money at her disposal and in short that, from the point of view of the Westphalian Government, she was guilty. In Senfft's narrative this seems almost taken for granted, and if Napoleon in the end allowed her to escape, it would appear to have been because he could gain nothing by persecuting further an infirm and elderly lady, and because he had failed to discover through her the plots in which he suspected her brother to be a leader. But according to Pertz Marianne was as innocent as a lamb. She subscribed no money, she knew nothing of Caroline v. Baumbach's banner, and as to Dörnberg's visit to the House and the deliberation of the rebel leaders which took place there, he makes no mention of these facts. But if at such a critical moment, and when so good an opportunity offered, Marianne moved neither hand nor foot to help the patriotic party, how is it possible, we must ask, to represent her as resembling her brother in spirit and patriotism?

What Stein may have felt on hearing of his

sister's sufferings, which he had unintentionally caused and was wholly powerless to prevent or alleviate, we know not. Nor have we any record of the exultation with which he may have received the great news of the Battle of Aspern, or of the feverish impatience with which he must have observed the great opportunity furnished by that occurrence of rousing all Germany, as he had so long dreamed of doing, thrown away by the Austrians. All we know is, that he continued greatly to admire the spirit shown by the Austrian population, and that he was enthusiastic about the Tirolese. After the Battle of Wagram he found it advisable to remove with his family from Brünn to Troppau, close to the Silesian frontier, whence, if the victorious enemy should find leisure to remember him, his wife and children might, if necessary, return to Prussia, and he himself take refuge in the State which still remained independent, though it did not choose openly to defy the universal tyrant, that is, in Russia. We may see from some letters which he wrote from Troppau, how little the Battle of Wagram was regarded in Germany as likely to decide the war. Though that battle was fought on July 6th, yet we find him in the latter part of that month, in August, and even in September, intent upon schemes of insurrection, in which he hopes to take a leading part, and which are based entirely upon the expected English expedition. These schemes, abortive as they proved, are of some interest, since, as we shall find, a good part of them was actually realised, and by Stein himself, in 1813.

The first sketch is contained in a letter to the Prince of Orange, dated July 28th :

The approach of the English affords a new prospect of the liberation of Germany ; it consists in a rally of all well-disposed persons round this armed Power, in order to draw out the military resources of the country between the Elbe, Mayn and the Bohemian frontier. For this object there is needed a point of union, in order to guide public opinion and connect the existing arrangements for an insurrection, in order to administer provisionally the countries which belong neither to Hessen nor Brunswick, in order to manage the nation in such a way as is suited to its character and to the direction which public opinion will take, and in general to guide the British Government by counsel and influence in a manner suitable to the condition of Germany.

Your Highness should place yourself at the head of this union ; you should be for North Germany what your illustrious ancestor William was for Holland, and to execute this plan you should resort to the English army. If your Highness will give a moment's attention to this idea, and if you think that the position I have held for many years till quite recently has given me experience which might be useful at this moment, I am ready to come to your Highness, to suggest to you in detail what is necessary, and take such part in the execution as you may assign me. It would be necessary to come to an arrangement with the Austrian Cabinet about it, and to resort as soon as practicable to the English army ; on the way the lost or broken threads might be gathered up of the connexions which were prepared earlier, and either broke out unsuccessfully or awaited a support which hitherto has been wanting.

On July 29th he draws up a fuller explanation of the same scheme, and addresses it to Gentz and Count Stadion. He assumes that another Wellington is about to land in North Germany. Such an English general will find himself much a stranger, unacquainted with the language, the localities, and the feelings of the people. A German Administra-

tion must therefore be created with the authority of the Emperor Francis, Germany's Protector (no longer Emperor), but in such a way as to spare as much as possible the feelings of Prussia and her adherents. A German Prince must stand at the head of this Administration; it might be an Archduke, or *the Prince of Orange*, or the Prince of Coburg, &c.; counsellors acquainted with North Germany must be placed at his side. Pending such an arrangement to be agreed upon with the British Ministry, some one must be sent to the English Headquarters who might influence the general in command.

Perhaps I may be found capable of contributing to carry out these views on account of my long residence in those countries, part of which I have governed, and on account of my manifold connexions there; perhaps I am entitled to consider myself in a condition to accomplish more than abler persons who have not the advantage of such connexions of old standing. That participation in such an enterprise, if it failed, would destroy my whole civic existence in Germany I fully realise, but the fact will not deter me from fulfilling my duty to my country any more than it did in much more deplorable circumstances.

For more than a month Stein cherished this scheme. He is still intent, it will be observed, upon the same object which had been avowed in the intercepted letter, that is, upon overturning the Kingdom of Westphalia by an insurrection assisted from without. In the Prince of Orange he thinks he has found a personage who may serve as a sort of link to connect England and Austria alike with the enterprise, and perhaps his own old connexion with the House of Nassau partly influenced him in the

choice. He hopes to stand out before the eyes of Germany with the Prince above him, just as the Burg Stein stands above the Lahn with the Schloss Nassau above it. In 1813 a similar scheme was revived on a much larger scale, and Stein was then able to show how thoroughly practical it was.

In this year it fell to the ground from the same causes which were fatal to the whole campaign, the indolent incapacity of the Austrian Government and the mismanagement of the English expedition. The Austrian answer is not written till August 27th, that is, nearly a month after Stein had made his proposal. It is then given in the shape of a long letter from Gentz, full of elegant composition, but only conveying that though the plan was obviously excellent and Stein the only man who could do what was proposed, yet he could hold out no definite hope that anything would be done even if, which was still doubtful, the war should break out again. There is, I think, already perceptible in this letter that profound mistrust of all popular movements, which had become in 1813 the ruling motive of Austrian policy. By this time the real object of the English expedition had become manifest, but it seems to have been still believed that either after the expedition had attained its first object or else independently, England would land troops in Germany. 'Only,' writes Stein on September 6th, 'they must entrust their expeditions to brave and resolute commanders. Public opinion is not favourable to Lord Chatham, and his brother never employed him. People call him, because he gets up so late, "the late Lord Chatham."'

On September 10th Gentz writes again in a

more encouraging tone, the negotiations having taken such a turn that he believes a recommencement of the war inevitable; but on the 29th he announces that peace is practically concluded, a result to which, melancholy as it is, he reconciles himself by reflecting that States which do not know how to carry on war have no pretensions to conclude advantageous treaties, and that to continue the war had become absolutely impossible, 'since after another lost battle not one stone of the Austrian edifice would have remained upon another.'

The two correspondents console each other by declaring themselves persuaded that the Napoleonic tyranny cannot last. It is to be observed, however, that their confidence does not rest upon any calculation of forces, but only upon a general faith that a system so monstrous cannot be suffered by Providence to continue. They do not seem to have any foresight of the series of occurrences by which in so short a time the French Empire was actually overturned.

With the Peace Stein loses for a while the prospect of restoration and even of employment. He drags on more than two years in the comfortless leisure of exile; during this vacant interval he ceases to have a biography. The curtain seems to have fallen and the play to be at an end. The hope he had cherished of retrieving the German disasters of 1805, 1806, and 1807, by adopting the Spanish system of popular war, seems to have been frustrated. The system has been tried, and the only result has been to bring upon Austria a disaster similar to that which had fallen upon Prussia at Tilsit. Austria

is now, if not quite so miserable, yet as completely incapable of resisting France as Prussia. And what shall we say of Germany? Germany had lost her only symbol of unity in 1806, but it had still remained her boast that two of the Great Powers of Europe were called German. Then one of those Great Powers had fallen, and now fell the other. Incomparably the greatest German Sovereign was now Napoleon himself, but the title he derived from Germany was secondary and lost in the more splendid one he took from France. 'It seemed,' as Fichte said, 'that the time would not be long till no one should live any longer who had seen Germans or heard of them.'

And yet this year, which seemed to see Germany finally buried out of sight, was in reality the year of Germany's new birth. For the war which had ended so unhappily was the first in which a true German feeling had been shown, in which the German nation had been awakened to consciousness. In the spirit in which it had been waged it was as unlike as possible to the wars of Austerlitz and Jena, and it was a prelude to the War of Liberation.

CHAPTER II.

STEIN IN RETIREMENT.

IF the years between the first rising of Germany and Napoleon's Russian expedition offer few incidents to the biographer of Stein, they afford him something by way of compensation in the descriptions of Stein, which have been left by observers who saw him at this period. For he was now celebrated and had become a tempting subject for literary portraiture. A certain Count Uwaroff, long after a prominent figure in Russian politics, published a sketch of two remarkable men whom he had seen, and to whose conversation he had listened many times in the year 1809. They were the two most redoubtable personal enemies that Napoleon then had, and they were both, when politics and particularly when Napoleon was the subject of conversation, incomparable talkers. These were the Corsican Pozzo di Borgo and the German Stein. From this composition, which by the way has already found an English translator¹, I extract what relates to Stein.

¹ Stein and Pozzo di Borgo as portrayed by Count Uwaroff. Translated by D. F. Campbell. London, 1847.

In the smiling environs of the little town of Troppau, in which during the campaign of 1809 a considerable number of refugees had settled, two strangers might often be seen in those days walking together, of whom one with a countenance of southern expression was still in the full vigour of life, while the other, already in years, arrested you by the irregularity of his features, and by a look which seemed to pierce into the depths of the soul. Besides these who conducted the conversation, we may imagine as a third a young man eagerly following the impressive dialogue, and listening to the confidential outpourings in which the most momentous questions were in turn touched and debated. These two men, who deliberated so calmly amid the din of French artillery, were Stein and Pozzo di Borgo, two outlaws on whose heads a price had been set which put them at the mercy of the first French sub-lieutenant who might have the good luck to seize them; to give the name of the disciple who accompanied them is, I think, unnecessary. These two men would talk, immediately after the failure of a campaign, of the future with a confidence, a tranquillity, a conviction which nothing could shake; the future, they were sure, could not but belong to them. As I am introducing the Baron vom Stein into this narrative, I will honestly reproduce some of the impressions he left upon my mind, which may chance to be of some interest for those who cannot rest contented with the narrow, superficial estimates of the contemporary Press.

When after the year 1806 the Prussian Monarchy lay dismembered, overthrown, dissolved, and hurled into the abyss of ruin, there appeared a man who undertook her restoration. Nay more, he dreamed of Germany's liberation at the moment when the proud conqueror disposed of her as absolute master. This thought, the thought of his whole life, Stein prepared to carry into effect at the moment when the last chance of success appeared to have vanished; but Stein was merely the representative, the symbol, of an idea which was deeply rooted in the heart of the more influential men. It is work for a mole, the historical problem of tracing those subterranean labours, which begin with the first days of the Empire and find their goal in the capture of Paris in 1814, an intricate mysterious web, a hundred times torn and let fall, an inextricable net composed of a multitude of personal peculiarities,

observations, hopes and diverging tendencies, but a net of iron which, when it was drawn together, involved the throne of Napoleon in its meshes and hastened his fall.

The Baron vom Stein, of all the German cooperators in this work of liberation the most penetrating and the most active, belonged to a class of statesmen of whom scarcely any remains are left. In those great families of the immediate imperial nobility, which were neither Austrian nor Prussian, lived a certain independence, I might say a certain republican feeling, if the most pronounced aristocratic convictions were compatible with such a tendency; the beginning of this school went back in a sense to the cradle of the French Revolution, and its progress was parallel with that of the Revolution. Stein, the most characteristic representative of the school, had something in him of Götz v. Berlichingen and of Luther; he laid great stress upon his scutcheon, and yet had thrown himself into the new movement with energy. I do not undertake to reproduce with any precision his views on the future of Germany; perhaps he had scarcely himself arrived at a complete formula; but so much I may assert; in the order of his thoughts, as in the thermometer of his feelings, Germany stood highest, ideal, united, a Germany nowhere to be found; and afterwards came the German Government which he served with zeal and energy. I believe indeed that Stein laboured to transfer the Protectorate of Germany to the House of Brandenburg, but only while he imposed upon that House the problem of uniting the German Fatherland, free and mighty, under a single banner, of bestowing on it large and durable institutions, of establishing it on the basis of the Protestant principle (in its original meaning), and of gathering all the intellectual forces of the nation into one focus. And to this offer he would assuredly have appended the famous Arragonese formula, 'if not, not.' With this one exception his devotion to the Prussian Monarchy and its Head was unqualified; a hundred times he had risked his life for it: but he would have renounced this allegiance without hesitation from the moment that it should have abandoned, in his estimation, the interests of Germany; then his feelings and convictions alike would have carried him into the camp of the oppressed. Thus Germany was first in his thoughts; next came Austria or Prussia, united or separated,

according to circumstances and in the measure of their adaptation to the general weal; as to the states of second and third rank, the repugnance of the statesmen of Stein's school to the small German princes was invincible; in him this repugnance showed itself in the strangest eccentricities. But it was directed against the principles, not the persons; to him Germany split up into thirty different States seemed an extremely ill governed country, and what he was used to call the tyranny of the small German princes formed the standing object of his bitterest sarcasm and his most vigorous denunciation.

But besides this there was a mutual family antipathy between the Immediate Baron and the small Princes; he maintained the equality of his scutcheon to theirs, and thus the pride of the nobleman conspired in him with the severe independent judgment of the thinker and statesman. Indeed this school was haunted in its utopian dreams with the thought of a revival of the old historical noblesse in Heaven knows what new forms; they dreamed rather, I must say it, of confederated states, of aristocratic republics, than of pure monarchies; in one word, what is called their liberalism was steeped in fancies of exclusion and class distinction.

Stein brought to the secret league of European opinion against the France of that time admirable activity and disinterestedness, exalted political intelligence and the noblest moral virtues. What means and machinery lay in his way he adopted without hesitation into the system of which he was the indefatigable champion; the indignation of thinkers, the ardour of youths, the grief of mothers, the sensibility of women, the eminent talents of Scharnhorst and Gneisenau, the glowing enthusiasm of Prince Louis Ferdinand, the devotion of Schill, the eloquence of Fichte, Arndt's pamphlets and Korner's songs; all were welcome to him, he availed himself of all. Thus he found in his road the secret societies, and although completely satisfied of their feebleness and inconvenience, yet he gave full play to the absurdities of the Tugendbund, to such a degree that his authority was appealed to, and many modern writers have made no scruple of putting Stein's name at the top of this society which was so alien to him. I have heard him say a hundred times that there is no worse political instrument than secret societies; that their complete uselessness

is the smallest of their faults ; and yet he let it have way because, after all, it was another tool in his hand which could be used against the enemy.

Those who did not witness that feverish time from the very midst of its silent incessant fermentation will never be in a condition to form a clear conception of the temper of men's minds and of their singular enthusiasm. I can still see Stein and Pozzo as they moved over the fresh green of the little peaceful footpaths of Silesia and brought all the turmoil of the political world into this provincial scene which brought to mind an idyl by Voss. Stein and Pozzo agreed in very many points, but differed to sharp opposition on a great number of subjects. Both laboured harmoniously to break the heavy yoke which France had laid upon Europe, but in all this Stein had only Germany in view, his beloved, glorious, ideal, fantastic Fatherland...an enormous cloudy picture in which the conceptions of our own time were easily mixed with the traditions of the age of the Hohenstaufen, the swords of Frederick and the buff-coats of Gustav Adolph ; the ravishing dream of German liberalism in its loftiest form, but yet only a dream, and even more unintelligible to the demagogues of our young Germany than to the Radicals of the French Press. Stein had devoted himself entirely to realising this castle in the air, at which the enfeebled sceptics of our time may be disposed to smile, and which perhaps did not always present itself to his own mind in the same form, but as a practical man he wanted first of all the liberation of Germany and was unquestionably the principal author of it.

No one brought to affairs such an intuitively rapid apprehension or such complete experience ; externally his square face with broad forehead, and piercing eyes shaded with strong eyebrows, his shoulders unequal, rather high and, as it were, shaped for the cuirass ; as to the mind, his inborn haughty uprightness, his religious faith as unimpeachable as his political ; his eloquence not technically correct, but irresistible when he spoke under the impulse of one of his ruling ideas ; his incorruptible sense of honour ; his well-trying allegiance to the law, all taken together, they made Stein a man of the first order. Nor let us forget the unflinching courage which he showed in the face of danger, and when that unprecedented proscription overtook him, when pressed on every

side he often, as he has told me again and again, did not know where he should hide the heads of his wife and children; as to his own, how gladly would he have sacrificed it had his blood had power to make the German oak put forth green leaves again, blackened as it was to its roots by the lightning flash. Stein was a figure of high poetry, but at the same time exclusively German; he and his followers are not to be judged by the ordinary standard of what we name public life; otherwise at the distance which now separates us from those events, those redoubtable Conservatives might be in danger of passing for no less genuine destructives than their opponents.

This description is not exact in every detail; for example, Stein certainly never made use of the enthusiasm of Prince Louis Ferdinand in order to bring down the throne of Napoleon, for he did not begin to be a leader till after the Prince was dead; it is in parts vague, for instance the reader will note that it speaks of Stein as a Liberal in one sentence and as a Conservative in another, and it is in many points too highly and romantically coloured. Stein, I hope to show the reader, was never the utopian here described. But I thought it worth while to place the extract here, partly because those conversations of Stein with Pozzo were much noticed and long remembered, partly because it presents a different aspect of Stein to that which we have hitherto contemplated, and an aspect in which he will henceforth be principally seen. Uwaroff knows little of Stein as a Prussian legislator, it is as the principal author of German liberation that he admires him. And indeed at the moment of his retirement and proscription Stein ceases practically to be a Prussian and begins to be a German. Henceforward he legislates no more, and hence-

forward Prussia is indeed to him, as Uwaroff describes, no further interesting or dear than as she seems the best means for restoring and uniting Germany. It may be doubted whether in this new career he is not greater than he ever was as a Prussian official. As a German he is at the same time more original and more himself than as a Prussian. Hardenberg and Scharnhorst might claim to have accomplished as much for Prussia as Stein, but he stands alone in his devotion to Germany and in his belief in her. For though Uwaroff would represent him as only one member of a school composed out of the Immediate Noblesse, which was devoted to an ideal Germany, yet I know not what evidence there is of the existence of such a school, or who beside Stein felt anything of such devotion.

‘Stein,’ says Uwaroff, ‘was a figure of high poetry.’ This would be most untrue, if it were taken to mean that he was a romanticist, like La Motte Fouqué. But a man may be poetical in two very different senses. He may be given to writing poetry, or to indulging in poetical dreams which unfit him for active life, but which, if they are very splendid, we accept as a full atonement for such unfitness and as proofs of an exceptional vocation. In this sense no one was less poetical than Stein, who never for a moment forgets the claims of practical life. But a man may also be poetical in the sense of being a good subject for poetry, and such he will be made by singleness of devotion, by the intensity of unselfish feelings. In this sense Stein was eminently a poetical person.

We were obliged to preface our account of

Stein's Prussian Ministry with a long review of the course of Prussian history since the death of Frederick the Great. Now that we pass from the Prussian to the German period of his life, the question arises how to give the reader a similar general view of the condition of Germany. Something has been done to this end incidentally in the earlier part of the book; I may perhaps do the rest without any long digression by taking advantage of the fact that the narrative at this point necessarily brings upon the stage the man who, more than any other, is the representative of Germany in its state of subjection to Napoleon, or, in other words, of the Confederation of the Rhine—Dalberg, the Archbishop of Mainz. When the proscription fell upon Stein, it naturally occurred to his friends to apply for help to Dalberg, who, as Prince Primate of the Confederation, might be considered as Napoleon's agent in Germany. The application was indeed fruitless, and Dalberg did not at any time come into any close connexion with Stein; but though the two men scarcely ever met, they passed their whole lives in full view of each other, for both were Imperial Knights, and both were connected with Mainz. Meanwhile the complete contrast of their views makes it particularly instructive to contemplate them together. We shall understand most clearly that devotion to an ideal Germany, which was characteristic of Stein, if we inquire how the Primate of the Confederation of the Rhine conceived of Germany. By devoting a few pages at this point to the Life of Dalberg, we may relieve ourselves of the trouble of much explanation later.

His commencements are like those of Stein, whom he preceded in age by thirteen years. Like Stein, he belonged to the order of Imperial Knights and had the title of Baron. He was early devoted to the priestly life, with a view to those great promotions which in the half-secularised German Church were always reserved for the scions of noble houses. After studying at Göttingen and Heidelberg he entered the service of the Elector of Mainz and became Deputy Governor of Erfurt, which belonged at that time to the extensive territories of that great see. This was in 1772, and for the next thirty years and until great eminence and great responsibility came upon him, no one in Germany probably led a more useful, gracious and enviable life. He was in the immediate neighbourhood of Weimar, and the golden age of literature at Weimar was about to open. Wieland settled there in 1772; in 1775 Carl August succeeded to the dukedom, and in the same year Goethe arrived to settle for life. The next year came Herder; Schiller not till thirteen years later. These were the great men of letters, though other celebrities went and came, and in the neighbouring University of Jena the constellation of thinkers and philosophers was at particular moments not less remarkable. Carl August was the founder of this great literary society, but after him no one deserved the honours of patron so much as Dalberg. Schiller asked his advice whether he should devote himself to history or dramatic poetry, and accompanied *Wilhelm Tell* with a dedicatory address to him. He took an interest in Forster and assisted Jean Paul. It was

at his request that W. v. Humboldt, then a very young man, wrote his celebrated Essay on the Province of Government.

It was not merely by his rank and station or by his benefactions that Dalberg gained the esteem of men like these. They recognized him as belonging to their world, if not precisely by his abilities, yet by real tastes and by refinement of character. Goethe more than once expresses himself deeply interested in his conversation; Caroline v. Wolzogen sets no bounds to her admiration, which moreover she retains to the last; and W. v. Humboldt, in writing to that lady, says,

I have a really strong wish to see Dalberg's character—which, in my opinion as well as yours, was quite unique in his age—rescued from oblivion and depicted for posterity. Only you can do it. But it would have to be handled so as to avoid the necessity of laying any stress either on his literary or on his political side, for both had weak points. He must be shown, where he was really unique, in the great nobleness of his feelings and views, the infinite grace, the susceptible temperament, the inexhaustible abundance in provocatives to ideas, even if ideas did not actually come out of them, whence also came his wit, in his freedom from all petty considerations.

It was more particularly after the year 1787, that Dalberg's position was so great and enviable. For in that year he was elected Coadjutor of Mainz, and so marked out as the successor of the reigning Arch-Chancellor of the Empire. He became, as it were, heir apparent to the German Pope. In this position, enjoying almost all the dignity without as yet the responsibilities or anxieties of the office, he continued for fifteen years. It was an age in which paternal government in both its forms, the secular

and the ecclesiastical, had been brought into fashion; and no one played the part of beneficent spiritual prince with such real good will or with such perfect grace as Dalberg. He wrote discourses on the art of government, in which he exhorted an imaginary ruler to think not of his own pleasure or pride but of the happiness of his subjects:

Give thyself to thy subjects examples of virtue and justice. Thou knowest how deeply rooted in human nature is the propensity to imitation, to *assimilation*. Trust not flatterers, their speech is poison to the soul; yet know, the worst flatterer is in thine own breast, the deceitful lure of pomp.....All this is universally true, and plain, like all theory, but the application of it thousandfold. Cast therefore ever a *seeing* eye, or were it even an eagle eye, on the actual state of the case. This, statesman, is thy province; ground thy decisions on this!

He believes that a glorious day for humanity is about to dawn:

Men begin to feel that needless limitations of freedom are harmful, that by wars countries are depopulated, that not the number of square miles but population and good order make the strength and happiness of states, that good institutions bring more benefit than conquests, and that more is done for the benefit of the labouring classes by encouragement than by compulsion. Tolerance, enlightenment, beneficence, order, diffuse themselves on all sides over the states of Europe. Happy the statesman who in thought and deed shapes his statesmanship in accordance with the principles of universal morality!

Thus he amplifies the ancient commonplace of philosophy concerning a ruler who should be a true shepherd of the people, tending the flock for their own good and not merely fattening them for his own. His urbanity was not at fault when one of the literary men whose society he so much sought, W. v. Humboldt, struck boldly at the root of the

whole doctrine, and maintained in substance that to call a ruler shepherd of the people, was both an insult and an injury to the people, for it assumed them to be sheep. He reconsidered his views, made some candid concessions, but adhered in the main to his paternal theory, and never ceased to enlarge on the sublime lot of the beneficent ruler, who, as is usual in such speculations, finds a rich reward in the consciousness of his own virtue. Should such a ruler find himself in a position where he is forced to do wrong, what course shall he take? Dalberg's judgment is peremptory and stern :

Is the statesman brought into the exceptional position in which nothing remains to him but the choice either to become an accomplice of unworthy actions or to resign his post, let him not hesitate; he will find in private life, in the practice of civic virtues, solace and happiness, and the example of his firmness will be a benefit to the state.

That there was hypocrisy in these professions no one who knew Dalberg could believe. His life was on a level with them. He was not indeed a saint, but what his writings led men to expect that he was, a benevolent ruler, a patron of everything good and useful, a model of urbanity and decorum, and consistent in his profession of Christian belief. On important occasions however, when he had been obliged to take a decided political course, he had shown a certain indistinctness of conception which had alarmed some observers. In that early matter of the League of Princes, when Dalberg was as yet only a candidate for the Coadjutorship, Stein had occasion to write to Herzberg that the question of the succession to Mainz was all-important, that

Dalberg, though much superior to all his rivals, yet had in this case behaved in such an ambiguous manner that the Elector was quite prejudiced against him, and that great pains must be taken, before the Prussian Court adopted him as its candidate, to find out whether his views really were Prussian or Austrian. It does not appear that this point was ever cleared up. He thought the League an excellent thing, but seemed incapable of comprehending that the object of it was opposition to the Emperor. He hoped for his part that it would grow to be a league of the whole Empire, including the Emperor himself, and that it would be made public, and become a bulwark of the public weal in Justice, Commerce, Local Government and Finance. Stein's brother, then Prussian representative at Mainz, sharing the family love of definiteness, was provoked into strong expressions about friend Dalberg's political sentimentalism, and declared that his 'union mania' might produce strange confusion on the electoral throne of Mainz. And this, it must be confessed, was but a most inadequate prophetic description of what actually happened.

Yet so shining was Dalberg's character, that when his election to the Coadjutorship took place, the Duke of Weimar wrote, 'No more honourable Coadjutor has for a long time been created in a more honourable way or by more honourable people than Dalberg.' And the Emperor Joseph, when Dalberg had commenced his official career characteristically by giving his adhesion to the League of Princes on the one hand, and on the other hand by writing a letter full of devotion to the Emperor, replied, 'For

the first time I see to my great satisfaction all Germany united in one point, viz., in its opinion about you; all the different parties do justice to your character and your views.'

The German Revolution was already in full progress when Dalberg at length became Archbishop of Mainz and Arch-Chancellor. In 1797 he had come before the public with a proposal that dictatorial power to save the Empire should be given to the Archduke Charles; if the proposal was unpractical, the reason given for it, viz. that if something of the kind were not done, the French would *in that year* give the death-blow to the system of Europe, showed a flash of insight, for that was the year of the Treaty of Campo Formio. The disendowment of the German Church was involved in the provisions of the Treaty of Lunéville signed in 1801, and the question with which Dalberg was occupied at the moment when he rose to the head of it was the possibility of saving some wreck of its wealth and dignity. He had at first tried to limit the secularisation to the property of the Abbeys. This was the drift of a pamphlet which he published in 1802, the year of his elevation. Driven from this position, he tried to save the three spiritual electorates, and at last was obliged to limit his endeavours to the preservation of the privileges of his own See. But Dalberg's warm-hearted policy of joining the League of Princes and pledging his devotion to Austria at the same time had not procured him the firm friendship of either the Prussian or Austrian court; had it been otherwise the direction of the German Revolution did not lie with any German Power, and he had to look elsewhere

for the support which might enable him to carry his views. At the critical moment when only the closest union between the two great German States could save Germany from falling under a foreign ascendancy, the old quarrel between Prussia and Austria broke out again, while the two foreign States which since the time of Frederick had claimed the right of interference in the internal affairs of the Empire were able to come to an agreement. The young Czar was easily influenced by the First Consul, who flattered him with the prospect of appearing as an arbiter in the affairs of Europe. Accordingly the fate of Germany, and more particularly of the endowments and dignities of the German Church, depended on France and Russia, or in other words, on the pleasure of Napoleon. Nominally it was to be decided by a Deputation from the Diet. This Deputation consisted of the representatives of eight potentates, of whom Dalberg was one; but before its first sitting was held, Napoleon had concluded separate arrangements with four of these Powers, viz. Prussia, Bavaria, Würtemberg and Hessen Cassel. In these circumstances Dalberg had it in his power to confer a great obligation on one of two persons, either of whom might be able to reward him by granting his wish to see his dignities preserved to him. These two persons were the Emperor Francis and Napoleon. By voting with the Emperor he might save him from an unfavourable division, but then this was all he could do. He could not give the Emperor a majority, and even if this could be done it was doubtful whether the Emperor's cause would gain anything. The

decision of the Deputation could not avail against the will of France and Russia backed by the support of many German States including Prussia. On the other hand, it was easy for Dalberg by supporting Napoleon's plan to obtain all he wanted, and the plan was almost certain to prevail in any case. This then was the course he took, and the really considerable service he rendered the First Consul was requited by the title of Elector, Imperial Arch-Chancellor, Metropolitan Archbishop and Primate of Germany. Mainz being now a French town, he was removed to the see of Regensburg, and to his new dignity were attached the principality of Aschaffenburg and Regensburg, the Countship of Wetzlar and some fragments of the original property of the see of Mainz. The revenues of these possessions amounted to 600,000 gulden, and they were made up to a million by an assignment on the customs of the navigation of the Rhine.

The Disendowment of the German Church, accomplished by an open conspiracy between the German princes and the great enemy of the German name, may perhaps deserve the emphatic judgment of Häusser that 'it is of all the scandalous episodes which recent history has to show by far the most disgraceful.' Dalberg's conduct was certainly less blamable than that of the secular princes. He at least did not play the part of a spoiler, but only was fortunate enough to escape the general ruin which fell on his order. If he laboured hard to earn the conqueror's favour, it was only what all did, and he alone might fairly claim to have acted from motives not purely selfish, and to have main-

tained in desperate circumstances the cause of his Church. But then the temporal princes only acted after their kind; it pains and startles us more to see the exalted spiritual prince, the friend of poets, the thinker, the writer on the connexion between morality and statesmanship, trying now to please Austria and France at the same time, as before Austria and Prussia, and in the end giving his adhesion to his country's enemy and purchasing by that course wealth and dignities. Far worse, however, than the act itself, was the series of acts which by a kind of necessity it drew after it, and the false position in respect to Napoleon into which it brought Dalberg.

The year 1804 unmasked Napoleon. In March came the murder of D'Enghien, in April Pichegru was found strangled in his prison; and Dalberg's nephew, afterwards well known as the Duc de Dalberg, being at that time representative of Baden at Paris, described the deed to his government as being without doubt Napoleon's, adding, 'The history of the Roman Emperors, the Lower Empire, there you have the picture of this country and this reign.' Early in June came the iniquitous sacrifice of Moreau to Napoleon's jealousy, and already in May he had openly turned his coat by creating the Hereditary Empire.

The lower Napoleon's character had fallen, the deeper was the degradation of Dalberg when he appeared the second time among his courtiers. This was in the September of this year 1804. The new Emperor was showing himself in his part of Charlemagne to his subjects of the newly acquired

Provinces. He appeared in Mainz, and there in his old electoral city Dalberg was summoned to his court. Other German princes, particularly the old Margrave of Baden, out of whose territory the Duc d'Enghien only half a year before had been dragged to be murdered, kept the Arch-Chancellor in countenance. Is it possible that Dalberg still hoped to exert some influence on the barbarian's heart, and perhaps to secure better treatment for his countrymen? If so, he was soon undeceived. He relates himself that so much struck were both the Margrave and himself to observe the exultation with which Napoleon saw the dissolution of the German Empire, that when he left them they fell weeping into each other's arms; and from this time Dalberg began to give it as his opinion that the neighbours of France must, in sheer self-defence, and whatever inconveniences it might lead to, make the ruler of France their friend.

But what if among these inconveniences was included the necessity of stooping to 'unworthy actions'? Did Dalberg remember what exhortation he had given to his imaginary ruler, 'Let him not hesitate to abdicate?' We find him a few months later dangerously high in the favour of the tyrant. In December he is at Paris to attend his coronation. Germany had just lost the first great name in her modern literature, Klopstock; and Dalberg succeeded to the place he vacated as foreign member of the Institute. At the Coronation banquet he alone was admitted, as a kind of German Pope, to sit with the Italian Pope among the members of the imperial family at the first table.

In the first war of the new Empire that of 1805, when for the first time the south-western States of Germany fought by the side of France against Austria, Dalberg's loyalty to Napoleon seems to have been for a moment shaken. Always his servility seems one degree less flagrant than that of the temporal princes. He refused to admit French troops into Regensburg, and issued a curious circular which, though characteristically vague, yet is more naturally interpreted as unfavourable than as favourable to Napoleon. He asks whether a constitution more than a thousand years old can be allowed to perish, whether the Land's Peace, the Ordinances of the Diet, the Golden Bull, the Peace of Westphalia, &c., &c., and with them the German name and nation, are to perish? But he does not venture to say in any intelligible words how he thinks the danger may be averted. It seems the last helpless struggle of a mind that wanted nothing for virtue but courage. From the time of the Battle of Austerlitz he appears as a mere passive tool, and is at last so much identified with Napoleon's cause that he falls with him.

But 'passive tool' is an inadequate description; at some important crises he consented to be Napoleon's active agent, particularly in the transition by which the old Empire fell and the Confederation of the Rhine took its place. I have marked the Battle of Austerlitz and Peace of Pressburg as the second stage of the German Revolution, the first being the Disendowment of 1803. Now as the changes of 1803 led Dalberg for first time to throw himself into the arms

of France, so did the second crisis plunge him deeper in servility. He had saved his electoral throne before by the aid of France, and now it was evidently again in danger. The Peace of Pressburg like that of Lunéville contained provisions which necessarily involved further changes of incalculable extent in the constitution of the Empire. The new sovereignty given to Bavaria and Würtemberg, the introduction of Murat into the Diet as Duke of Cleve and Berg, made it evidently impossible to maintain longer even the name of the old constitution; and if a revolution took place, what so likely to disappear as that Arch-Chancellorship which had scarcely escaped the earlier convulsion? Dalberg found a way of saving it. He began by a letter (April 19th, 1806) addressed to the French Ambassador at Regensburg, in which he declared that the Constitution of the Empire must be regenerated :

Most of its laws are empty words without meaning, since the Courts, the Circles and the Diet have no longer the means of protecting property and personal security against the attacks of arbitrary violence and rapacity...

This portentous condition is scarcely to be endured by a nation so essentially deserving of respect for its regard for law, its industry and its natural energy ; but the regeneration of the German constitution can only proceed from the ruler of a great Empire giving energy to the laws by concentrating the executive power in his hands. To whom then shall we look ? *Not to the Emperor of Austria, Francis II.* He is worthy of respect in his private character, but the sceptre of Germany has fallen from his hands, since he violated his Election Compact in occupying Bavaria, bringing the Russians into Germany and dismembering the Empire to retrieve the errors committed in the separate quarrels of his own dominion. Yet might Francis II. become

Emperor of the East to hold the Russians in check, and at the same time the Empire of the West be regenerated under the Emperor Napoleon in the form it had under Charles the Great, when it was composed of Italy, France and Germany. It is far from impossible that the present plague of anarchy might determine the Electors to such a regeneration ; at all events, they once allowed themselves to be induced by the confusion of the Interregnum to choose Rudolph of Habsburg. The means of the undersigned Hereditary Arch-Chancellor are indeed very limited, but his intentions are sincere : he counts especially on the wisdom of the Emperor Napoleon in the circumstances which disturb the south of Germany, which is peculiarly devoted to him : the Hereditary Arch-Chancellor wants nothing for himself, and is persuaded that the seeds of the German regeneration would quickly germinate if the Emperor Napoleon could every year for a few weeks associate at Mainz with the Princes that adhere to him.

Then followed an apostrophe to Napoleon.

Napoleon's genius does not confine itself to making the happiness of France ; the great man is intended by Providence for the world.

But this time Dalberg knew that generalities, even of this startling kind, would not serve the turn. He ended with a definite proposal, and it was that Cardinal Fesch should be named Coadjutor to himself.

In other words, Napoleon's uncle, a Corsican and a complete stranger to Germany, was to be named next in succession to the Arch-Chancellorship. This was Dalberg's plan for saving the office itself ; to destroy its independence and respectability, to lay it at the feet of the new despotism as an additional facility for enslaving mankind, as though it were not a thousand times better that the office should disappear with dignity than that it should continue as
gine of tyranny ! He writes,

The Elector flatters himself that in the present melancholy circumstances of the German Fatherland his co-Estates will not interpret this step unfavourably, since it was in his conviction the only means of preserving at least for the time so important a part of the German constitution and the dignity of Electoral Hereditary Arch-Chancellor which is so intimately connected with it.

The suggestion was adopted; on May 27 came Dalberg's announcement to the Diet that he had named Cardinal Fesch his Coadjutor, and that he was confident of the approval of the Emperor Francis. He was mistaken in this; among the numerous expressions of astonishment and disapprobation came on June 18th a letter of remonstrance from the last Roman Emperor, among the last a Roman Emperor ever signed. But Cardinal Fesch remained Coadjutor, and the Arch-Chancellorship survived the Empire to share the infamy of the Confederation of the Rhine.

The title was, however, somewhat altered. He is now called Prince Primate, and takes possession of Frankfurt, which, as we have before remarked, was the new federal town, with some other territories in addition to what he already had. At a later date Regensburg was taken from him and given to Bavaria. But he continued to be president of the Upper Chamber in the Confederation of the Rhine as in the Empire, and it was by this correspondence that Napoleon studied to preserve an appearance of continuity between the new form of Germany and the old.

Thus in his old age did this most benevolent, sympathetic, and fascinating of men, stoop to play

one of the most humiliating parts, and sell his popularity to the enemy of his country. On all the most magnificent occasions Napoleon counts on him as a sort of stage-property. He is summoned to Paris to marry Jerome to the Princess of Würtemberg, just at the time when Stein is setting out from Nassau to assume the dictatorship at Berlin. When Stein is tottering to his fall, in September, 1808, Dalberg is adorning with his indispensable presence the great gathering at Erfurt. It was at Erfurt that he had spent his honourable and peaceful youth in the neighbourhood of the great poets and thinkers whom he had loved and befriended, and whose homage had been freely given to him. Now once more Goethe and Wieland were his guests, but his manner was observed to be absent and depressed. What may have been his thoughts when at the end of that year he read the act of outlawry against Stein? Stein's name and family had been familiar to him nearly all his life. Could he do anything for his old friend? Had he perhaps any interest with Napoleon? Might a man of his age and elevated position not venture to remonstrate with the Emperor? Might a bishop not even use spiritual authority, and remind him of the claims of duty and religion? Nay, the world had moved on since the days of Ambrose and Theodosius. But it was embarrassing that Stein's friends expected something from the Arch-Chancellor's influence. A letter from Stein was delivered to him at Frankfurt by Eichhorn, who interested himself at this time most zealously in Stein's affairs. Dalberg gave Eichhorn a private audience. At first he refused altogether to receive the letter, but on

being assured that it contained nothing which could compromise him he opened and read it. He then said to Eichhorn, 'You have not named the man, and I too will not and must not name him. What I can do I will do with pleasure. I will send for you and give you an answer in writing'—and he hurried away. From this time Eichhorn put himself assiduously in the Primate's way, and took all means to attract his attention, but found himself always passed by with cold courtesy. At last he begged for another private audience, and was told to come the next day to the public audience. At the end of it, as he was leaving the room Dalberg stepped up to him and said, 'You brought me a letter. You can easily imagine that I can do nothing. I have not been able to do anything yet. I wish I could do something.' Another letter came from Stein, and Eichhorn renewed his solicitations, but always with a similar result.

The moral of Dalberg's biography does not require to be pointed out, for in truth it is somewhat too glaring already. The unlimited servility he showed and the incredible meanness of conception which could lead him to fancy that he was serving the cause of the Church and of religion in falling down and worshipping such a personage as Napoleon Bonaparte—all this will be clear without a word. Rather perhaps ought something to be said in mitigation of the sentence the reader will be tempted to pass. The letter quoted above, in which Dalberg, speaking with all the authority of his position, hands over the fate of the Empire to France, ought not to be judged without taking into consideration the difference which existed at that time

between Germany and France or England. To Stein and a very few similar men this difference did not exist. To Stein the Confederation of the Rhine and everything that belonged to it was a work of the devil, precisely as to an ordinary Englishman any association in England would seem which on the occasion of a French attack should side with the invader. But the patriotism which in an Englishman or Frenchman is a matter of course was then rare among Germans, and this not in consequence merely of some difference of national temperament. It was a result of the fact that the only organisation which gave unity to Germany was not a national organisation nourishing patriotism, but a universal or imperial organisation nourishing cosmopolitanism. The Holy Roman Empire was indeed said to be 'of German Nation,' but it had been founded as a universal empire and it had never lost its character of universality. It did not stand in Europe side by side with other states, but it preserved the tradition of a time when Europe had regarded itself or tried to regard itself as one. Consequently, while in other states which, like England, had severed themselves almost entirely from the European community there had sprung up naturally a feeling answering to that love of country which we admire in the ancients, such a feeling had had nothing to foster it in Germany. The Germans, as such, had never fought for their country, had never known what it was to be proud of their country's valour. In their wars one half of the Germans had generally been allied with a nation against the other half, as Protestant with France and Sweden against Catholic

Germany in the Thirty Years War, or Prussia with Hannover and England against France, the Empire, Austria and Russia, in the Seven Years War. These wars had left a permanent effect on the way of thinking of the Germans; it had become, for example, an instinct with the Protestant Germans to look upon France as their protectress against Austria, and to expect French interference in the affairs of the Empire. Upon such a nation the arguments which religion and humanitarian philosophy urge against exclusive patriotism had an effect which we cannot easily understand. They were *too* successful, for they did not, as in other nations, encounter a stout resistance from national pride and prejudice. In Germany cosmopolitanism was taken in earnest, for national pride did not exist. We have already seen a specimen of this state of feeling in the French party of Berlin; in the rest of Germany, if we put aside the highlands of Austria, it was still more rife; and the life of Dalberg is chiefly interesting and has been chiefly dwelt on here, as illustrating it. His notion that it might be possible to regenerate Germany by putting it under the government of France, was not the naked treason it seems at first sight. It was a thought that would naturally occur to one accustomed to think of the state to which he belonged, not as the organisation of a particular nation which was the rival of other nations, but as a universal organisation overleaping distinctions of nationality. The prophecy of the elder Stein when he said that friend Dalberg on the throne of Mainz would produce strange confusion was most literally fulfilled. As in his youth he had been unable to imagine any

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reason why Austria should not be a member of the League of Princes, so in later life it seemed to him most natural and delightful to put the ruler of France at the head of the Empire.

This will be a convenient place to exhibit more at length that cosmopolitan tendency which marked not merely the practice of politicians, but even the speculations of almost all German thinkers in that age. Dalberg's want of patriotism moved indeed the indignation of Stein's school, and of those who were enthusiastic in the War of Liberation; but at the beginning he only followed the fashion, and his views were much in harmony with those which prevailed in the literary circles of Weimar and the philosophical schools of Jena. Gervinus has made a collection of the utterances of the great writers on this subject. We learn that the patriotic sentiments of Klopstock made no way even in his own school and were ridiculed as an illusion by Herder. Lessing declared that 'patriotism was a thing of which he had no conception, and that at the utmost he could only imagine it as a heroic weakness which he was very glad to be without.' He also delivered the oracle that the German national character consisted in electing to have none, and though, according to Gervinus, this was intended by him as a reproach the nation took it as a compliment. When in 1793 the war with France struck out here and there a patriotic sentiment, Wieland sneered at the novelty as a mere passing fashion; he could not imagine how such a virtue as patriotism could be reconciled with our duties to other nations; he did not remember in his youth even to have heard such a virtue

named, or the word 'German' ever used as an epithet of honour, and it struck him as wrong that the word should now put forward a pretension to be so used. He protests against Roman patriotism as morbid and monstrous, and dislikes all such characters as Brutus and Milton. Herder wrote an essay on the question, Whether we have a country in the ancient sense of the word? and decides that we have not and ought not to wish for it, for it had been the ruin of Greece, Judaea, and Rome. 'Of all kinds of pride,' he says elsewhere, 'I hold national pride with pride of birth and race for the most foolish.' And again: 'What is a nation? It is a great untrimmed garden full of plants and weeds. Who can attach himself indiscriminately to a great collection of follies and blunders, excellences and virtues?' But the greatest writer of that age is well known to have gone beyond all others in his rejection of patriotism. Goethe lived through the years in which it might seem that the least susceptible heart could not but be inspired with it, and he was especially called upon to show it. The other great writers had then passed away and he stood alone with an unrivalled authority. The uprising of the people against its foreign tyrants was one of the simplest, most natural movements; it required no explanation, no justification, and Goethe was not one of those poets who cannot write on occasional topics. Yet he who filled whole volumes with complimentary verses to princes and princesses complained that he should be expected to feign an inspiration he did not feel in the War of Liberation; and not only so, but refused not merely to write but to interest himself in any way in what was

going forward. This has been too often represented as a personal peculiarity of Goethe's, as arising either from something quite special in his view of his art, or from a remarkable and perhaps excessive philosophical serenity which he had attained. It ought to be put in connexion with those opinions on patriotism which I have quoted from his contemporaries and brothers in literature, and with political acts like those of Dalberg. No one can fail to see the resemblance between Goethe's bearing towards Napoleon in the celebrated interview at Erfurt and Dalberg's bearing towards him. Goethe no more than Dalberg seems to think of Napoleon as an enemy; it is not merely that they do justice to him as candid enemies should, but that they have no hostile feeling whatever towards him, not even a wish that he may fail in his enterprises. And it is not easy to imagine that had Goethe been in Dalberg's place he would have felt any particular reluctance to acting as Dalberg acted.

It may seem strange and in some sense a retrogression that this liberal cosmopolitan feeling of the age of Goethe should give place to a patriotism of the old type, with all its narrowness and prejudices. The movement in which Stein took the lead, the movement which turned all Germany into a camp, and imposed the duty of military service upon multitudes whose lives would otherwise have been passed in study or peaceful industry, may seem more like a reaction than an advance. And now, when at the distance of half a century we see the principle then laid down in full operation, and Germany, Russia, France competing with each other in the creation

of armies such as the world never saw before, there must be few who can rest satisfied with such a state of affairs considered as final and normal. The old theory of a unity in Europe, upon which the Holy Roman Empire was built, was, purely as a theory, higher than that nationality theory which has taken its place. If it had been possible to make the Empire a reality, to realise that legal state of things in Europe which was always presumed to exist till Frederick repudiated it by the invasion of Silesia and the Partition of Poland, and so led the way to the still more enormous lawlessness of the Revolution and Napoleon, this would have been a much more hopeful course than the creation of national armies and the revival of the antique type of patriotism. But if this was impossible, nothing could be more mischievous than that it should be supposed to be possible, or that confused thinkers like Dalberg should go about uncertain whether they were to regard France as an enemy or as a confederate state in a European union. It was precisely on this ambiguity that Napoleonism (in its first form) traded so long and successfully.

Further, the utter repudiation of patriotism by such men as Herder and Goethe was in itself an extravagance; and it was probably better that patriotism should revive even in too extreme and too narrow a form, than that it should remain in the condition of a discredited and obsolete virtue. For even in a legal or federal condition of Europe such as the Empire foreshadowed, and as the future will probably realise in a more satisfactory way, patriotism would still have its place, just as within

the limits of a healthy State there is room for local or cantonal feeling. In truth, the question for Europe in the age of Napoleon was similar to that which has been proposed in our own time to Germany; only it required to be answered in the opposite manner. It was the question, Which shall have precedence, unity or liberty? Napoleon offered Europe unity but together with slavery; Stein's party offered liberty but at the expense of dividing Europe more than ever, and reviving prejudices and jealousies that the eighteenth century boasted to have outgrown. The justification of this party lies in the difference between a single nation and a union of nations. In a single nation unity comes naturally before liberty; but when a number of nations are united under despotism, experience shows that liberty does not easily spring up, but that a general decay sets in, because the rival nationalities are used by the despotism as a curb upon each other.

I return from this digression.

All other attempts to procure some indulgence for Stein proved as fruitless as that which had been directed to Dalberg. The sequestration was carried out at Nassau by the Duke, and at Birnbaum by the Government of the Duchy of Warsaw. The Prussian Government itself stooped to make a show of executing the decree of arrest, and gendarmes went to Breslau, where it was understood Stein intended to make his abode, in order to look for him. The King wrote to him from St Petersburg immediately after his flight, promising to interest the Czar in his welfare, but at the same time

desiring that he would not think of returning into Prussian territory. He did, however, assign him a pension of 5000 thalers, upon which Stein's family were supported after 1810; in 1809 he lived, as he tells us, upon a sum of money which he had saved and upon the sale of his plate.

During the war Napoleon was for a time brought into the neighbourhood of Stein. It is said that Davoust on entering Brünn made inquiries after him of the governor, and remarked that he had been wise to take his departure in time. A certain official at Brünn, named Andre, advised him strongly to throw himself upon the conqueror's mercy, and offered to mediate. We shall not understand how strong the temptation was if we do not consider that in the war of 1809 Napoleon seemed to have triumphed over the moral forces themselves, and that his enemies had no longer hope, though they might still have faith. He gave his decision in a letter dated November 2nd. 'Circumstances have put me in a position which calls upon me to set the example of a firm, enduring, and independent character; I will not renounce so honourable a vocation for wretched considerations of property and money.'

After the conclusion of peace he desired to go to Prag, but the Emperor determined that he should return to Brünn for the winter, fearing apparently that at Prag he would become the centre of an Austrian Tugendbund. In February, 1810, however, he received from Metternich an intimation that he might now, if he wished, make Prag his abode. In June of that year, accordingly, he removed

thither with his family, and here he remained till the Russian war broke out. He found in Prag a good deal of congenial society, and seems to have enjoyed as much comfort as was possible to a man of his temperament in the then condition of his country and of the world. He had just before been meditating a plan of securing his property to his daughters, and emigrating himself to Kentucky. As late as July, 1811, we find him writing, 'I am heartily tired of life, and wish it would soon come to an end. To enjoy rest and independence it would be best to settle in America, in Kentucky or Tennessee; there one would find a splendid climate and soil, glorious rivers (he is thinking of his Rhine) and rest and security for a century—not to mention a multitude of Germans—the capital of Kentucky is called Frankfurt.' But he ceased to think seriously of this scheme, and consoled himself with his unfailing resource, the study of history.

His daughter Henriette was now about 17, and he undertook to instruct her in history. We can easily understand with what an intense interest he who had watched for twenty years the mighty movement which had commenced in 1789, who had seen the undulation of it gradually approach and at last overwhelm Prussia, he who had himself presided over a transition which in his own country answered to the Revolution in France, would in this melancholy holiday of his life review the history of his age. He studied it methodically with all the original documents which could be procured at Prag. Pertz gives us to understand that he produced an actual history of the Revolution, extending

to the year 1799. I was naturally desirous to examine this work, which could hardly fail to contain passages strongly illustrative of Stein's character and views, and might even contain valuable original information concerning the first Revolutionary War, which Stein had observed from a very advantageous position, but the inquiries I made lead to the conclusion that the statement of Pertz must be exaggerated. The family preserve notes, which Henriette at this time, and Therese at a later, made of their father's lessons, but they do not know of any book actually composed by Stein himself.

The object of these lessons seems not to have been simply to help forward his daughter's education, but to inspire her with due horror of the occurrences which had led to the ruin of her father and of her country. He could not at that time be expected to look on the history of the Revolution with an impartial eye; nay more, the most philosophic student could not then have discovered those compensations for its enormities which it is easy to see now. Europe seemed to be ruined almost beyond redemption, and it seems at this time to have been his absorbing thought that the rising generation were destined either to a life of slavery or else to great and terrible trials. As a matter of fact, they were destined to see a prosperous and peaceful period, for the mighty effort by which the yoke was broken was to be made by Stein's own generation and by Stein himself. But the experience of 1809 had led Stein to fear that Europe would never overcome Napoleon himself, but only perhaps his successor. Accordingly he falls into the way of thinking in which

Fichte had preceded him. He begins to see no hope but in education. The young must be taught duly to detest the condition of affairs around them, to understand how it came about, and to be prepared to rebel against it as soon as an opportunity should be given. While he expounds the French Revolution to his daughter, we find him writing a Memoir on the subject of Education in Austria, of which it is not known whether it was ever actually laid before Count Stadion, and only known that, if so, it had no effect. It gives a graphic picture of the state of the Continent under Napoleon's Empire, and what makes the picture most striking is that the state is not described as transitory but as likely to continue. The Continent is cut off from the New World, almost as if Columbus had never lived. All surplus production is devoted to war. Culture has changed its character. The *École Polytechnique* flourishes, but political and historical studies are discouraged, and many Universities, Stein mentions his own University of Göttingen, are almost destroyed in the general impoverishment and the violent condition of affairs. Public opinion exists no longer, and in international dealings there is no longer any show of morality. This state of things may pass away, but on the other hand it may continue. In that case are we to look forward to something like a revival of the Middle Ages? The only remedy seems to lie in guiding literature and education in such a way as to steel and strengthen character, and to maintain the belief in principles. And as the latest experience shows that our hope lies in Austria rather than Prussia, it is particularly im-

portant that this remedy should be applied in Austria.

He interested himself also in Austrian finance, and corresponded with Gentz and others on the best way of removing the incubus of paper money.

Meanwhile it was natural that his family should constantly press upon him the interests of his daughters, and the mischief which might be done to their prospects by Napoleon's abiding enmity. Wherever he might live he was compelled to feel himself Napoleon's subject. He did not refuse to his wife permission to write the following letter to Napoleon, which is dated, Prag, January 6th, 1811.

SIRE,

The magnanimity and justice of Your Imperial Majesty inspire a mother with the confidence which emboldens her to lay at the feet of your throne the claims of her children on the lands of their ancestors situated in the Confederation of the Rhine, the Duchy of Warsaw, &c. These lands, which have been struck with sequestration by the Imperial Decree of December 16th, 1808, have long been subject to a majorat which was renewed in 1774.

The continuance of the sequestration deprives my children in the present of the means of instruction required for their education, and in the future of a property which the foresight of their ancestors had assured to them, since a sequestration lowers the value of the land, which moreover through the severe proceedings of the Duchy of Warsaw has been depreciated in an extreme degree, while the creditors who advanced part of the purchase-money receive neither principal nor interest.

Your Imperial Majesty has displayed in so glorious and conspicuous a manner your love for justice and your desire to re-establish the reign of law by restoring in France to the families spoiled by the Revolution their estates and properties, and re-

moving in Germany the sequestrations and confiscations which the war had occasioned, that I venture to hope with confidence that you will deign to restore tranquillity and happiness to me and my children by according my respectful prayer that you will remove the sequestration in favour of my children. This act of clemency would add feelings of eternal gratitude to those of respect and submission, with which I venture to subscribe myself, &c.

This letter was to be presented by the Austrian Ambassador at Paris, Prince Schwartzenberg. Stein writes a little later: 'We need not be surprised if my affair is not even laid before the great man and remains still-born, since the protection due to a Minister of State does not extend to extorting the restitution of a theft through a miserable King of W. Besides you know we do not live in an age when one kills oneself to serve another: why should Prince Schwartzenberg expose himself on my account to a sour face from Napoleon?'

Champagny and Maret did not report the Emperor likely to listen favourably to the request, and the letter was never actually presented.

I may close my account of this comfortless time with another sketch of Stein as he appeared to a visitor who saw him at Prag. This is the well-known diarist, letter-writer, and anecdotist, Varnhagen v. Ense. His description is more vivid and interesting than that of Uwaroff.

Stein was in familiar intercourse with the best families, but lived for the most part in great retirement and had little society; indeed society could seldom gratify his requirements, for he made constantly the highest demands. He would have people honourable and German, but they must be also refined and well-mannered and scientifically cultivated, they must be also resolute and

energetic, and if possible they must give entertainment by their intelligence and wit. To be sure he was all this himself, but he did not often meet with such persons....Pfuel introduced me to him. His reception of me was meant to be friendly, the intention was unmistakable, but in spite of that it was rather hard and rough. You could see at once that he liked to proceed without much ceremony, and could only be forced by some clear display of power, genuine force of mind, or haughty independence to allow another person to deal with him on a footing of equality. Even in my first visit marked differences of view came to light in our estimate of persons and books, and Stein seemed surprised that I did not at once withdraw my opinions. But the surprise seemed not disagreeable to him, and he invited me cordially to visit him frequently. I had more than one inducement to do so. My admiration was sincere and unbounded. But I had also another concern. For my future career it would be necessary to undertake studies which hitherto I had been able to neglect, and for which at Prag I wanted guidance and books equally. I had revealed my ignorance with complete candour to the profoundly instructed statesman, and begged his advice and assistance.... He very readily promised me help, both by oral instruction and by his abundant supply of books which he had caused to follow him to Prag.

Whenever I called I received a sort of *privatissimum* on questions of public economy, illustrated by examples drawn from practical experience, without, to be sure, any orderly arrangement, yet presenting in the most vivid manner the most weighty views and facts. His own vivacity hurried him along; any defect of knowledge he thought he perceived, any doubt that ventured to express itself increased his eagerness, and he had the patience to enter into the most detailed explanations. In such cases personal remarks would not be wanting, especially on Prussian officials, and it relieved him even more than it instructed me to criticise their proceedings, and I often remarked what an extraordinary effect his flashing utterances would have had both in matter and form if they had been delivered as parliamentary opposition. Thoroughly knightly in his favourite ways of thinking, favouring a strong and rich nobility, he was still a most ardent friend of the peasantry, and wanted to see the countryman thoroughly free and independent.

(Here follows a report of Stein's vehement defence of Kraus from the attacks of Adam Müller, who had called him a mere echo of Adam Smith, which I omit.)

When Stein spoke in this excited manner his voice and gesture trembled in a singular way, while he half closed his eyes, and at last his words became scarcely audible. But directly afterwards his eye would be fixed, large and piercing, on the hearer, in whose face he would read the least sign of secret opposition and break out with a new rough and even rude attack. A conversation with him was a continual contest, a continual danger; you were never secure from finding yourself by a sudden turn treated as an enemy, because it pleased him to fancy the person he happened to converse with as an opponent, even though he was in full agreement with him, and that without any ill-will or personal feeling and without retaining any permanent impression. This gave his conversation a peculiar charm and led one rather to seek than avoid the excitement it produced; and so in particular at a later time the Emperor Alexander was quite enchanted by this active and rough nature, which in the presence of the highest personages only took an additional tinge of self-will, and felt for him as much attachment as admiration.

Scharnhorst and Gneisenau were the men of his heart. Next to them he praised Niebuhr, whom he valued equally as a practical statesman and as a profound scholar, and whose book on Roman History he first put before me, in respect to which, with all his admiration for its acuteness and learning, he regretted that Niebuhr did not really write German but always wanted to be English in German, having spoiled his style by his early and intense study of English. Of the German scholars in general he did not think favourably; but he praised and recommended the writings of Heeren as thorough and practical, and lauded Fichte particularly for his Discourses to the German Nation; otherwise he had a repugnance for the philosophers and declared the newest school to be positively mad. Even Schleiermacher's philosophical religion was too intellectual for him and more than suspicious in point of orthodoxy. He thought highly of Justus Gruner.

To fill his time worthily and at the same time usefully he had undertaken a serious study of the French Revolution; he wanted once for all to get to the bottom of these occurrences which still determined the destinies of the world and to know the strong and weak side of them. The documents then attainable all lay on his tables; he read the writings of all parties, and did not shrink from the large tomes of the *Moniteur*, in order to draw from the sources of the public deliberations. Naturally his discourse wandered also to this subject, on which he would most gladly have mounted a platform to express his feelings and views. Each new visit found him further advanced in the course of the history; I could distinctly trace the impression which each phase made upon him. His hatred of the Revolution was unbounded, particularly in the first times, when everything might have been determined by a few measures and a little resolution.

Varnhagen goes on to describe how violently Stein took a side, while he himself in the literary fashion wanted to represent it all as a fatal inevitable evolution. On this point they argued interminably.

I remember once, when excited and hard-pressed, to have said to Stein that he was an Imperial Baron, a noble and an aristocrat, and that as such his judgment was prejudiced. I was shocked, when I had said it, at my own audacity. Stein was silent a moment, grew quite quiet, and said with gentle seriousness and much dignity, that I had brought a charge against him which had some appearance of truth, but in order to show me that it was not altogether well-deserved he would tell me by way of example, that though he belonged to the oldest nobility and had grown up in the habits and views of nobility, yet the real confidential friends whom he had had in his life—he confessed that he had been obliged to give them up later—had both been of the citizen class; he spoke of Rehberg and Brandes. ‘Perhaps you did not think that,’ he added.

One day I found him again over the *Moniteur*, and quite unusually excited. He spoke eagerly of the Revolution, but did not chide. He had reached the Convention, and here, where

his hatred should have reached the height, he found himself constrained to astonished admiration by the prodigious force and unparalleled power with which the Committee of Public Safety ruled France internally, and victoriously defied all external foes. These powerful measures, this fearful rigour, and almost superhuman energy, impressed him; they suited his nature and taste, they were such as he would have liked to turn against the French for the deliverance of Germany. How powerful these people had been, what they had done and accomplished, he never ceased extolling; he delivered an enthusiastic eulogy on the Committee, which he accused me of not properly appreciating. But at my next visit his admiration had given place again to detestation, and in the further course of the history I only once found him particularly roused, and that was when he came to the misfortunes of the Directory, where it was a pleasure to him to be able to mix a full measure of contempt with his hatred.

His rapidity and impatience were closely connected with his bodily organisation. He once asked me the rate of my pulse, and then, with a laugh, held out his wrist, and bade me count the beats. They were more than a hundred to the minute. He declared that that had always been his ordinary pulse when he was in perfect health. He seemed to regard this peculiarity as a charter from Nature, allowing him to indulge in more fiery ebullitions than other people.

CHAPTER III.

PROGRESS OF REFORM IN PRUSSIA.

PRUSSIA had gained from Stein's Government not merely great Reforms, but a momentary restoration of her self-respect. Perhaps at the moment the latter gift was more precious than the former, as it was also the most characteristic gift Stein bestowed upon his country. The Reforms would not perhaps have been carried out by any other Minister with equal energy, thoroughness, or rapidity; but, as we have seen, scarcely any of them were quite of Stein's original suggestion, and it is conceivable that a good part of them might have been carried into effect by another Minister, if Stein had never obeyed the summons that brought him from Nassau. But the daring schemes of his last few months, the appeal to the people that he had meditated, and not least the conspicuousness of the downfall which these schemes had brought upon him, stirred for the first time the stagnancy of Prussian Philistinism. It was the first gleam of greatness that had touched the reign of Frederick William III. Since the Peace of

Basel we have traced the foreign policy of Prussia through successive stages of feebleness, its characterless neutrality, its feeble attempt to ally itself with France and Russia at the same time, even when France and Russia were at war with each other, its disastrous war, its miserable ruin by the sudden coalition of France and Russia against it. The new course struck out by Stein had indeed led to nothing; Prussia was no better off than before. But the new maxims had been laid down with a breadth and force which left a lasting impression, and the man became the part he had played. Stein had his equals in political insight and his superiors in tact; but assuredly no one appeared in that age so worthy to be the champion of German independence. The intensity of his character, his patriotism, so rare in Germany in those days, and that 'old-fashioned German speech,' which in his mouth was 'so sinewy, so noble, and so grand¹,' all this fitted him much more for the part of the statesman of a war of independence than for that of an economist and financier. He was cut short too soon in this career, and Prussia was forced to drag on four more years of ignominy; but at least a momentary gleam had touched her prospects and she had witnessed the prelude of her War of Liberation.

His successors Dohna, Altenstein, and Beyme, were perhaps in a manner condemned to failure by the very conditions on which they took office. They could not satisfy the nation, for they represented a reaction to the policy of submission at the moment when the spirit of resistance had begun to possess

¹ The expressions are Ranke's.

the nation in a manner quite unprecedented. Thus, in a memorial addressed to the Queen by the Foreign Minister Golz, and dated May 5th, 1809, the King is recommended to take the popular side on the ground that 'the audacious proceedings of Stein' have paved the way to a Revolution which will break out unless the Government gives satisfaction to the popular feeling against France. And yet, since Russia adhered steadily to France, this course was not to be expected from Ministers of courage less high than his. But, on the other hand, they could not satisfy Napoleon, for they had come in to make payments to him which Prussia was actually incapable of making, or at the least only capable by means of extreme financial expedients which had not yet been suggested. And this incapacity the Ministry had to plead to Napoleon at a time when he was doubly incensed against Prussia on account of that popular agitation, that first whitening of the waves for the storm of the Anti-Napoleonic Revolution, to which his attention had been drawn. The Ministry, accordingly, only lasted till the beginning of 1810, falling as soon as the time came when it could no longer avoid taking a definite course as to the method of satisfying Napoleon's demands. It would not probably have lasted even so long but for the Austrian War of 1809, which preoccupied Napoleon, and threw Prussia into the background for the better part of a year.

We have seen what that year might have witnessed but for the change of the Prussian Ministry. Stein and Scharnhorst might have been as Bismarck and Moltke, Stein and Gneisenau as Chatham and

While the North of Germany might have been moved to help the South and however Russia might oppose Canning in England would perhaps have recognized his opportunity and assisted Prussia, now that the days of Hanover and Brunswick were clearly over. As it was the North of Germany was active enough to show how great a change had passed over public feeling, but not active enough to achieve anything. Several risings occurred, Katt made a bold attempt to seize the fortress of Magdeburgh, Dörnberg called the Electorate of Hessen to arms, Schill marched out of Berlin at the head of his hussars, and after wandering to and fro for a time, got possession of Stralsund. And everywhere in the North, as in the Tirol and on the Danube, we feel that we are breathing a new atmosphere. The war has become poetical and is full of matter for romance and ballad. It is as though the new Century began now, rather than nine years earlier, with fresh feelings and fresh virtues, and as if the long iron age of Europe, the age of military absolutism, after creating its greatest representative in Napoleon, showed signs of wearing itself out by its own excess. But for want of the unity that Stein might have given them, all these attempts are abortive. Katt and Dörnberg made their escape, Schill died the death of a hero, Brunswick made his way to England; and when the Treaty between France and Austria was concluded in October, the North of Germany sank again into silent subjection like the South. Meanwhile the Prussian Government had played again almost the same part as in 1805. It had not intervened in the

war, but it had given almost as much offence to Napoleon as it could have given by intervention. It did not know how deeply the Czar had pledged himself at Erfurt and thought, as Stein had thought, that when once the war had begun he would be found on the side of Europe. In May, that is, after the campaign had opened unfavourably for Austria, and when Napoleon was already in Vienna, Frederick William promised to come to the help of Austria as soon as his army should be ready. Again, as in 1805, attempts were made to hurry him against his will into a decision. The Archduke Ferdinand invaded the Duchy of Warsaw, and pushed his march as far as Thorn, in hopes that Blücher might act as Garibaldi did in 1860, and leave his King no choice. Colonel Steigentesch was openly sent to negotiate at Königsberg and drove the King to inquire whether he came as an ambassador to himself, or as an emissary to seduce his troops. But at the same time the King said, 'I hope to come; nay, I hope not to come alone,' and Steigentesch took care that Napoleon should hear of this utterance. It is worth noticing—so apt are we to imagine Napoleon always as dictating peace after a crushing victory—that after the Battle of Wagram Prussia still contemplates joining Austria, and even more so than before, as she believes that Russia will no longer find it possible to hold with Napoleon. The Convention of Znaym, which followed that battle, is regarded by Prussia as a contrivance on the part of Austria to give the other Powers time to come to her help. The battle took place early in July, but Prussia's views are still warlike in September. It

seems to have been rather the failure of the Walcheren Expedition late in August and Wellington's retreat after Talavera than the defeat of Wagram, that determined Austria to another disadvantageous peace. Meanwhile Prussia had almost ceased to conceal her views from Napoleon. She had demanded a reduction of the War Contribution, and when she got no answer, had begun to delay her payments or to pay smaller sums. The money saved in this way was expended upon military preparations, and Altenstein himself describes some acts of the Prussian Government at this time as almost equivalent to a declaration of war. It was natural, therefore, that the Peace should bring a new time of trial for Prussia. She was now to suffer not only for the acts of Schill but for the ambiguous bearing of her Government; it seems too that the change in Napoleon's policy which now began, the disposition he showed to leave his equal ally Russia for a submissive ally such as he hoped to find in Austria, was also unfavourable to Prussia. From the time of Tilsit a certain forbearance towards Prussia had been regarded as an essential part of the arrangement between Napoleon and the Czar, and accordingly harshness towards Prussia was the first sign of the dissolution of that arrangement. Napoleon began to press more than ever for payment of the Contribution, a payment always impossible and more impossible than ever now that arrears had been suffered to accumulate. And now, when this impossibility was pleaded, he began to say that if money was not to be found he was ready to accept territory instead. 'I shall fix a term,' he

writes, 'and if Prussia does neither the one nor the other (that is, pay money or cede territory) before the term has expired, my troops will have orders to march in again and take possession. I shall know how to enforce payment.' It was reported more definitely that on March 7th, 1810, he had said to the Princess Thurn and Taxis (sister of Queen Louise), 'If the King of Prussia does not pay, he must cede Silesia to me.' Payment, however, was out of the question; out of 68,000,000 fr. which Prussia was bound to pay by March 8th, 1810, only 23,000,000 had been paid on Jan. 1st. In these circumstances, the Ministry, on March 12th, drew up the following representation :

The Emperor Napoleon insists on the strict fulfilment of the treaties. This, especially since the failure of the Dutch loan, has become impossible. It has probably been the intention of the French Government throughout, to force the King to a cession of territory ; at any rate, such is its intention now. Prussia has no means of resistance, for her only ally, Russia, neither will nor perhaps can help her, and the greatest misfortune that could befall Prussia would be a breach between France and Russia. In these circumstances it is of the utmost importance that the cession made should as little as possible exceed in value the amount of the debt, and should be such as to establish the closest alliance with France, and the most satisfactory relation, not only with France, but with her allies, Saxony and the Duchy of Warsaw.

This language was evidently intended to describe Silesia.

Once more, and in a more fatal form than ever, is Prussia threatened with that necessity which hitherto had never actually come upon her, the necessity of becoming not merely the victim of Napoleon but his active slave. The 'closest alliance'

now spoken of by the Ministry means of course an offensive alliance against all his enemies, including Russia, and with this is now coupled the cession of the hard-won acquisition of Frederick the Great. Once more the danger was averted, and in such a way as to cause a kind of revolution in the Prussian Government. It appears that at the beginning of 1809 a book had been published entitled 'Thoughts of a Man of Business on the Needs of the State and on the Deficiency of Money,' by a certain Kabruhn of Danzig. In this book an attempt had been made to show that the system then pursued by England might be applied with modifications to Prussia. The Bank of England had long since suspended its specie payment, yet England had supported fourteen years of war and showed no symptoms of impoverishment. This was because England had credit, and credit Prussia had not. But the Prussian Government had domain lands, and there was a mass of ecclesiastical property, particularly in Silesia, which might at need be applied to public purposes, as the Church property had been applied in France at the beginning of the Revolution. It would be possible then to give to Napoleon, if necessary, the whole metallic currency of the country, and fall back for domestic uses upon assignats secured upon land. This book had attracted the attention of Hardenberg and he had made suggestions founded upon it as early as March, 1809. His suggestions had passed unnoticed, but in the crisis which had now arrived Prince Wittgenstein recollected them. In the night of March 11—12 he drew up in great hurry and excitement a memorial, which he pre-

sented to the King. Had not England carried on war by means of advances from a Bank which was independent of the Government but through which the money of the country had passed into the hands of the Government? He was sure he could find in the Prussian territories 25,000 men who would each lay down 4000 thalers and form themselves into a Bank with a capital of 100,000,000 thalers, of which at least a fourth part would be in bullion. He pointed to Hardenberg as a man capable of carrying such a scheme into effect.

Prince Wittgenstein is known to us as an adventurer, to whom it would be little safe or creditable for a great King to trust himself; even Hardenberg hardly professed to be a financier; and the scheme itself had a chimerical appearance. But it seems that the King had already formed a low opinion of his Ministers. He had been heard to remark, when the Austrian Ministers were spoken of slightly, that the Emperor Francis was in the same situation as himself. Perhaps experience had raised his standard of men. Altenstein had certainly much knowledge and intelligence, and would seem to have been vastly superior to the advisers with whom the King had appeared so well satisfied in the times before 1806. He had come in with Hardenberg when things changed for the better; we meet with him in the society of Schön and Niebühr; no one writes with more contempt of the old corrupt system; no one was bolder in planning comprehensive reforms. He had not indeed been a great reformer in office; but we might expect that the King at least, so little given to bold innovation, would have been glad of a

little rest after the breathless race which Stein had given him. It was otherwise, and we now find the King, for the first time in his reign, turning away from his Ministers because they are not energetic enough and because they propose to him a cession which he thinks humiliating. He had perhaps learnt, after trial first of Hardenberg and then of Stein, to feel himself happier, if not safer, in strong hands than in weak ones.

On the very day, March 14th, on which the Report of his Ministers recommending the cession of Silesia was laid before the King, a courier went out to summon Hardenberg from his retirement at his brother's house at Grohnde. He carried, at the same time, one of those bewitching notes from Queen Louise. 'Your neighbourhood can do us nothing but good. I should regard it as a new proof of your friendship....Great God! what a situation is ours! I am quite ill. God bless those who mean honestly! That means that I pray for you.' A negotiation began, which ended with the expulsion of the Ministers and the appointment of Hardenberg, by an Order of Cabinet of June 4th, to the office of Chancellor of State with the same sort of dictatorial authority that he had held before. At the commencement of this negotiation Hardenberg refuses to send in a plan on the ground that he does not possess the requisite information. He confines himself to laying it down that every extremity must be resorted to sooner than the cession of Silesia, and at a meeting with the King on May 2, he declared that the whole Ministry must be dismissed as having become unworthy of holding office through

the proposal they had made. The next question was of obtaining from Napoleon a revocation of that disabling sentence which he had passed on Hardenberg at the time of the Peace of Tilsit, and Napoleon granted this. Thus Hardenberg found himself in his 60th year for the second time at the head of the Prussian State, and the position he now gained he held for the rest of his life.

There seems reason to think that the change made was for the better. Probably Hardenberg was the best of available statesmen to pilot Prussia through the stormy time which was before her. He inspired both the King and foreign courts with confidence. He also had energy enough to take up again the work of internal reform which his predecessors had dropped, and the Edicts of 1810, 1811 are not less important than those of 1807, 1808. But it was a change which had a misleading appearance, and was by no means what it professed to be. Hardenberg seems to return to office in order to save Silesia by discovering new sources of revenue by which to satisfy Napoleon's demands, and this appearance is countenanced by the fact that whereas before his return Silesia seems on the point of being surrendered, afterwards the danger is found to have blown over. Yet it has been calculated that whatever else Hardenberg may have done, he did not actually make more satisfactory payments than his predecessors, that the bold scheme of finance which was to save the State was in fact abandoned and very different measures substituted for it when he was once in office, and that accordingly Silesia must have been saved to the Monarchy by some other cause independent of Hardenberg's return.

Let us try to bear in mind that it is mere impossible romance which represents Napoleon as actuated by passion or revenge in those great decisions of his which changed the map of Europe, and we shall see at once the absurdity of supposing that he was resolved to seize Silesia if a certain monthly sum were not paid him by Prussia. We may be sure that however much Prussia paid, he would seize Silesia if it served his policy to do so; and on the other hand that he would not seize it otherwise, however little Prussia might pay. Assuredly the fate of Silesia did not depend in any way upon the state of Prussian finance; it depended on Napoleon's relations to Russia and Austria. He was desirous of getting possession of it because it would strengthen his position in the East of Germany, which became deeply interesting to him as soon as he began to foresee a breach with Russia. On the other hand, he bore in mind that he could not seize it without alarming and alienating Austria. If in the early months of 1810 he threatens to seize it unless Prussia pays up, this only means that at that time he was thinking principally of his relations to Russia; if after Hardenberg's return nothing more is said of Silesia, this is not because of Hardenberg's return, but perhaps because Napoleon was just then intent upon winning the Austrian alliance, or it may be because his Spanish affairs did not just then allow him to think of such an annexation in Germany. In like manner it is childish to suppose that Napoleon felt actually indignant and vindictive towards Prussia because she did not fulfil impossible obligations towards him which had been imposed upon her by sheer force. We might indeed have blamed

Hardenberg if he had really, as he professed to do, found new means of filling Napoleon's treasury out of the resources of the country. To pay him as little as possible should in fact have been the first object of the Prussian Government, since his treatment of Prussia was in reality not in any way affected by the amount of her payments. It is therefore not at all surprising to find that no increase in the payments preceded his adoption of a milder tone after the return of Hardenberg.

It seems not unlikely that Hardenberg himself fully understood this, and that he did not really attach the importance he professed to attach to his new financial plan. That plan was perhaps the diplomatic expedient which was to pave his way back to power, while his private design was simply to save the country by energy, by surrounding himself with good men, and by intelligence and adroitness in diplomacy. Perhaps it would have been well if some of the politicians to whom he now made advances could have seen his conduct in this light.

Niebuhr, since his return from Holland, had held a post in the Financial Department, which gave him the principal charge of the Public Debt. While the negotiation between the King and Hardenberg was going on, his irritable temper had been provoked by Hardenberg's proceedings. Hardenberg writes that he had found all the officials ready to give him information except Niebuhr, whom he describes as 'a noble but irritable person, who raises ghosts in order to fight them.' On May 23rd Niebuhr resigned his post, alleging that the danger which threatened the country from the French in March had been averted

solely by the prospect which just then offered of floating his Dutch loan, and that Hardenberg's last step, which consisted in procuring from the King an order to suspend some financial operations begun by Altenstein, had brought the department into an intolerable condition. He was perhaps in this frame of mind when he was asked to report on the financial scheme. His report contained a solemn denunciation of it as likely to be fatal to the State, and departing from the ordinary rule he delivered this report not to Hardenberg but to the King himself. But the King had already committed himself to Hardenberg, and to listen to such a personal appeal would not have been fair to the new Premier. A negotiation followed between the two statesmen, Hardenberg entreating Niebuhr to send in his own plan, which he said 'he would willingly adopt if it were better.' This, however, Niebuhr refused to do unless he might have the supreme and exclusive charge of carrying it into execution. Hardenberg appears to have actually offered him the Ministry of Finance and only to have stipulated that his plan should first be known, discussed, and adopted. Even this Niebuhr refused, declaring that 'it was positively wrong to reveal excellent means so long as they might be used in connexion with perverted measures, and thus promote the ruin of the country.' He retired from public life and began his brilliant professorial career in the University of Berlin, which was just then coming into existence.

It is evident that such conduct was only reasonable on the supposition that Hardenberg would allow no alteration of the main features of his

scheme; and considering the flourish with which the scheme had been brought forward this might have been supposed to be the case, had not Hardenberg explained so carefully to Niebuhr that it was not so. He seems to have put himself unreservedly in Niebuhr's hands, as though he had said,

The piece, you think, is incorrect ; why take it,
I'm all submission, what you'd have it make it.

And in the end, as we have said, it did dwindle away till scarcely anything remained of it.

Stein's sentence was passed as follows in a letter to W. v. Humboldt, written October 28th.

I positively cannot approve the conduct of Schön and Niebuhr ; he was offered the post of Finance Minister, he declined it because of his disapproval of the proposed plan, and because the King had no confidence in him. This confidence he might acquire ; he had the Chancellor as mediator and support, *the plan itself was under discussion and will probably be much modified.* Niebuhr declares his dissentient opinion ; Hardenberg invites him to discuss the matter, and to send in another plan ; to this he gives no answer, but instead, hands in to the King a lengthy argument against Hardenberg's scheme, without proposing anything else, and now wants to pass for a martyr of truth. All this is nothing but a refined egoism, and the mania so much in vogue beyond the Elbe of pouring a sauce of high-sounding, pretentious phrases over quite ordinary actions.

We are told that later, when he had fuller information, he changed this opinion, and expressed full approbation of the conduct of Niebuhr and Schön. It is, no doubt, true, that he changed the opinion he formed at first in favour of Hardenberg's plan ; it is also true that in narrating these occurrences in his autobiography he passes a very harsh judgment

upon Hardenberg's character and then adds, 'He began his administration with the expulsion of the former Ministers, whose Departments he took to himself with the exception of the Department of Justice which H. v. Kircheisen received, and of two very deserving men, Privy Councillors v. Schön and Niebuhr, because they vigorously exposed the emptiness of his chimerical financial plans.' But these words contain no approval of Niebuhr's conduct, and it would also, I believe, be quite unfair to accept literally an estimate of Hardenberg which is full of the bitterness engendered in the angry controversies of a much later time. Co-operation in public affairs would be scarcely possible, it seems to me, on such uncompromising principles as those of Niebuhr. As a matter of fact Hardenberg did not ruin the State, as Niebuhr predicted he would, but steered it safely into port without Niebuhr's help. But is it Roman to abandon the State at the moment when you think it is on the verge of ruin, and when you believe yourself to possess the secret that will save it, in order that you may give brilliant lectures on ancient history? Is not this rather the quietism of Goethe, against which, in theory, Niebuhr protests so strongly? He justified his conduct to himself by an extravagant depreciation of Hardenberg (in whom he afterwards declared that, though prepared to like him in spite of the irregularities of his private life, he had been more disappointed than in any other man he had ever met, except Johannes Müller), and by picturing the general ruin to his timorous imagination as on the very point of taking place. Thus he writes to Stein :

On the situation of an unhappy State in which your Excellency cannot but take an interest, nothing can be said in a few words, for the very reason that everything is paltry and miserable. A change of Ministry that has closed the reign of conceited egoists establishes that of a still worse set. What does your Excellency say to Scharnweber and Oelssen as the inspirers of Hardenberg, who is grown altogether incapable, and has been spurred into a financial escapade by Kabruhn's publication? or to F(ürst) W(ittgenstein) as his acknowledged patron, under whose protection and by whose intrigues he has made his way back to the promised land of the Ministry? One is struck dumb before the presumption with which the flattest ignorance delivers oracles, the complacency with which this weak fool congratulates himself among the rocks upon which his clumsy hand will infallibly in a few days steer the rotten ship. To me it seems the last phase of our bewilderment which precedes the final ruin.

Thus have the base people who assailed your Excellency fallen by the same hands and through the same intrigues that were used against you.

This last sentence may require a little explanation. Hardenberg had insisted on the dismissal of Altenstein, Nagler, and Beyme. Dohna, whom we have regarded as Stein's nominee, was not at first expelled; and the three who were might be regarded as the leaders of the party which had overthrown Stein. Wittgenstein had been the instrument in both cases, and in both cases Napoleon's name had been made use of.

In order to explain the harshness of Stein's language when he charges Niebuhr with a 'refined egoism,' it must be pointed out that, though Niebuhr was no doubt actuated by a sense of duty, he certainly did not sacrifice anything to it. He was the very opposite of a martyr. His letters show that before the return of Hardenberg was thought of, his

distaste for official life and his yearning for a life of study had become almost irresistible. According to F. v. Raumer he had no capacity for business. 'The tenderness of his character became weakness, as soon as prompt decision and firm action were wanted rather than reasoning. Niebuhr, said Minister Stein, is only useful as a Dictionary to look things out in.' This writer describes him as having brought his section, that of the public debt, into utter confusion, and says that it was in vain to attempt to help him. Hints, suggestions, statements laboriously drawn, were laid before him in vain. 'Everything disappeared in Niebuhr's great writing-desk, out of which *nulla redemptio*.' However this may be—and perhaps v. Raumer writes in the interest of Hardenberg—Niebuhr in throwing up his place and passing into the University of Berlin, which opened in this very year at Michaelmas, took a step, which not only turned out most fortunate for him in the end and laid the foundation of his fame, but gratified his tastes and inclination in the highest degree at the moment. He showed how infinitely, like most of his countrymen in that age, he preferred the *vita umbratilis* to action, and it is of real importance to recognize that it was so because from his writings we should take him to be a strenuous patriot of the antique type.

Stein himself, on being consulted, sent in a critique of the plan on August 2nd. Niebuhr and he agree in recommending an Income Tax, which Hardenberg had rejected as 'inquisitorial, opposed to the feelings of the nation, and condemned by opinion.' He remarks that,

As to Opinion, it is little to be considered in Prussia, where reigns a deep-rooted egoism, imperfect culture, dissoluteness, combined with Northern hardness and rudeness. This unruly public opinion must be corrected by severe punishments, and not led still further astray by forbearance and compliance. It would be hard to find ill-will and misrepresentation combined in a greater degree than in the protocols and debates of the Estates of the Electoral Mark on the Income Tax.

But he is more willing than Niebuhr or Schön to allow of the increase of paper money, which made a prominent figure in the scheme. Disendowment of the Catholic and Protestant Churches and of the Order of St John, which had also been proposed, he approves, but he recommends that the necessary reserves made for the maintenance of religious worship and of educational institutions should not be placed under the control of the State. He goes on to speak of other measures which he holds necessary to be taken :

One of the most necessary is a better composition of the Ministry, dismissal of the weak-headed, clumsy, mindless and characterless D (Dohna, I suppose, to whose deficiencies Stein's eyes have been opened), of G(olz), who has become useless and contemptible through emptiness, sloth, and unhappy domestic circumstances. The former might be replaced by V(incke), the latter by H(umboldt), who would at the same time administer the section of Public Instruction. The department of Finance must be given to Schön, but under the express obligation to carry out a plan of finance agreed upon beforehand.

He continues,

The spirit displayed by the nobles and officials is so corrupt and refractory, that it cannot be regenerated without strong measures, such as sudden dismissals, arrests, banishment to small places of the people who are active in spreading mischievous opinions or

undermining the resolutions of the Government, wherever they are isolated and fall under observation, *e.g.* N^r (Nagler), Z^w (Zastrow), Hⁿ (Hagen). All attempts on the part of the King's courtiers to injure the Head of the State must be inexorably punished, they must be instantly dismissed and their behaviour punished; the maxims followed by Richelieu to control an unbridled, mutinous, intriguing nation, must be adopted. We must not be troubled by outcry; a great counter-party will form itself through wise, strong, and beneficent government, proper assignment of posts &c., and through guidance of literature.

Authorship influences the Germans more than other nations, on account of their passion for reading and of the great number of people who are influenced in some way by the public educational institutions. This passion for reading is caused by their tranquil temperament, their inclination for an inner life of contemplation, and their political system which commits public affairs to a few officials and not to the nation. The number of authors is greater in Germany than in any other country of Europe, since the great number of institutes of learning gives occupation and support to a crowd of *savants*. We must work on these to save the Kingdom of Truth and Right, and frustrate the wretched mischievous writers, who represent the actual state of things as beneficial.

He goes on in this strain, repeating much that we have read already in the Political Testament.

There had been a quarrel about paper money as early as 1805 between Schön and Stein, and no doubt the dangers of paper money were much greater now than they had been at that time, for there was all the difference imaginable between Prussia in 1805 and Prussia in 1810. Then it was to all appearance at the very zenith of its greatness, a mighty state of almost 10,000,000 of inhabitants and guarded by a mighty army of a quarter of a million of men. Now it had about half that population and about one-sixth of that army, while its

very existence was not secure for a year. Niebuhr and Schön were now agreed, and it may be rightly, in recommending great financial caution. On August 16th Schön wrote to Stein about the effect of his partial approval of Hardenberg's scheme, as follows :

Wilberforce the Pious says: 'When Governments begin to sink, and Heaven's decree is gone forth, you can no longer say, This or that man is responsible, this or that occurrence determines the result. Every one brings a faggot to the fire, Heaven stands higher than all intelligence, and reasoning lags behind events.' Thus speaks the pious man as observer of what was and seer of what was to be. And only so was it possible that the constant man ('felsenfest'—'Tu es Petrus') should with pure and noble intention send a message, which indeed did much good, but pretty well undid or made doubtful what the Dane and the Prussian were on the point of accomplishing by hard toil. Both said, Paper and People and Money and Bank and Country and Duty and Tax and Sale (in short bold finance in so critical a situation) can only lead to destruction. The Dane, the gentle Dane (*i.e.* Niebuhr), was so excited that he warned our Master himself, spoke to him respectfully but frankly, and brought hatred and enmity upon himself by doing so. The Prussian too (he is speaking of himself as a native of the Province of Prussia) did what duty prescribed ; and now, it seems, Dane and Prussian alike will have to betake themselves to their homes. Both will carry information of what they did.

Stein replies to the quotation from the pious Wilberforce by quoting—very appropriately, I cannot but think—texts of Scripture which enjoin strength, constancy and candour, and goes on to justify his advice, not as liking paper money or forced loans, but as admitting of them as a desperate expedient for the purpose of freeing the country within the year during which he thinks the Spanish War

would divert Napoleon's attention from Prussia. It must be acknowledged that there lurks in this reasoning the inveterate misconception that Napoleon intended to keep his engagements.

The general support which was given by Stein to Hardenberg at this crisis may perhaps have considerably smoothed the new Minister's difficulties. He seems to have made the most of it by striving to connect his financial policy as much as possible with Stein's. He declared Stein to be his master in finance, and sought to have a personal interview with him. This was arranged through Count Re-den, whose house at Buchwald, lying close to the Bohemian frontier, was useful again as it had been at the time of Stein's flight. About September the 16th the meeting took place, Stein having been furnished beforehand with many important papers, as the correspondence between Hardenberg and Niebuhr, a financial plan and other documents by Schön. These papers seem to have convinced him of the expediency of at least postponing for the present a new emission of paper money, and to have strongly confirmed him in his preference of an Income Tax to a forced loan. He also adopted a suggestion of Niebuhr's that the ecclesiastical lands, instead of being secularised, should only be made the basis of a forced loan taken from the Churches which owned them. What passed at the interview of the two statesmen is not known; but Stein as yet is so far from sharing Niebuhr's views, that he declares himself soon after to hope much from the energy of a man 'so intelligent and noble' as Hardenberg.

The result of so much deliberation appeared on

Oct. 27th in two Edicts which commence the series of Hardenberg's reforms, as Stein's reforms had been commenced in the October of 1807. The first of these Edicts is 'on the altered constitution of all superior Departments of State in the Prussian monarchy,' the second is 'on the Finances of the State, and the new arrangements with respect to Taxation.' The first has two objects in view. It is at the same time a continuation of Stein's administrative reform—and from this point of view it has been considered above—and also the Act by which Hardenberg's own dictatorial position is defined. The difference between Hardenberg's first dictatorship and the dictatorship of Stein has been pointed out; his second dictatorship differs from his first and corresponds closely to that of Stein. That is, it is not a dictatorship of war but of reconstruction. The Chancellor of State is not, as Hardenberg had been in 1807, a Foreign Minister extending his control over the Departments of the Interior and of Finance; on the contrary, he is not Foreign Minister at all. Golz retains that Department. But Dohna is now dismissed, as Altenstein had been before, and Hardenberg combines, as Stein had done, the Departments of the Interior and of Finance. Seated, as it were, here as in his head-quarters, he extends his control, also as Stein had done, over the rest of the administration.

The second Edict contains Hardenberg's financial plans in the shape which they had at last assumed. It announces as future measures the partial disendowment both of the Catholic and Protestant Churches and of the Order of St John, though with

the reserve of wealth sufficient for the abundant endowment of the priesthood, of schools, and of benevolent foundations, also the sale of the Domains; but for the present a forced loan upon both and a foreign loan are to suffice. A Commission is to regulate the Debts incurred by the Provinces and Communes during the war. Exemptions from Land Tax are abolished. New Stamp Duties are announced, also a Patent Tax, and by way of compensation—in the spirit of the older Edict of October—the removal of a number of fetters from trade and industry. The Edict concludes with holding out to the nation the hope of ‘a properly organised Representation both in the Provinces and for the whole State, of which We shall gladly seek the advice, and in which We, in accordance with our paternal love of our subjects, shall gladly give to our loyal subjects continual evidence that the condition of the State and of the Finances improves, and that the sacrifices made for that purpose are not in vain. So shall the bond of love and confidence between us and our faithful people ever grow closer.’

We must pause a moment before we leave finally behind us the Ministry which separates the reign of Hardenberg from that of Stein. That Ministry is redeemed by one achievement and one name. The Section of Cultus and Public Instruction had been given to W. v. Humboldt, who had arrived in Berlin from Rome on his way to take possession of his office, about the time when Stein left Berlin so precipitately to escape into Austria. These two men did not meet until at the dissolution of the Ministry Humboldt obtained the appointment of Ambassador

Extraordinary to Vienna. About the time of the secret interview between Stein and Hardenberg and before the new Berlin University, of which he was the principal founder, had opened, Humboldt passed through Prag on the way to his new post and visited Stein. On his arrival at Vienna he wrote to him as follows:

I avail myself of the safe opportunity for which I have waited, of thanking your Excellency for the kind reception I had from you at Prag, and of saying to you how extremely interesting and agreeable I found the two days I spent with you. If they gratified the heartfelt, lively desire I had to see one I revered so much, they at the same time made me more than ever regret that I was not in Germany at the time when you were at work among us. I should have double pleasure and satisfaction now in working with and under you. Only men of great mind and energy can meet the needs of the time, and the real and most serious calamity is just the want of such....I have just begun to unpack my books, and think of taking up again some studies that have been interrupted for the last two years. I think, more than I have been in the habit of doing, of combining with them financial and economical studies. Firmly convinced as I am that I shall never return to official life and shall scarcely be employed again at all at Berlin, yet it is once for all my firm intention to shirk no duty, and I should like, when the time comes, not to have to reproach myself with having left unused the fortunate leisure of a vacant season. Ease and freedom of conscience is assuredly the highest object one can aim at.

Thus W. v. Humboldt comes upon our scene just as the other great scholar-statesman, Niebuhr, makes his exit. They move, as it were, in an opposite direction. Niebuhr, nurtured in the Göttingen, or more patriotic school, feeling a certain repugnance for Goethe's religion of art, Roman rather than Greek in his predilections, speculatively prefer-

ring action to contemplation, and looking up to the one German of the time who had the genius of practical action, Stein, nevertheless abandons public life somewhat too abruptly for the study. Humboldt, on the contrary, comes to us from the circle of Goethe and Schiller. Of an old noble family from the Mark of Brandenburg, born in 1767, and thus ten years younger than Stein, he had early entered the service of the State. But by his marriage (1791) with Caroline v. Dacheröden, who was related to Dalberg, he was early drawn into the Weimar circle. He abandoned public life for the life of self-culture, and wrote in 1792, that is at the age of twenty-five, his still-remembered 'Ideas towards an attempt to fix the limits of the action of the State.' It has often been remarked how striking a contradiction is given by the great educational reform of Humboldt to the principles of this early work, which is directed, in the words of its motto taken from Marquis Mirabeau, *contre la fureur de gouverner, la plus funeste maladie des gouvernements modernes*; but to understand Humboldt's jealousy of Government, we ought to realise clearly what Government meant in the hands of Frederick the Great, then only six years dead. He wishes that some one would do for legislation what Rousseau had done for education. He thus begins his career, not like other Germans with a mere political quietism arising from ignorance of public affairs, but with a reasoned and intelligent aversion to everything connected with Government. From this time till 1806 Humboldt, like Prussia, puts a line of demarcation between himself and the world, professes a system of neu-

trality, and lives for culture alone. He studies antiquity with F. A. Wolf, prince of the scholars of the age; he settles at Jena for the sake of Schiller's society, reviews the *Woldemar* of Jacobi, writes in the *Horen*, publishes an elaborate critique of Hermann and Dorothea. His quietism at this time is even more intense than Goethe's own. 'Every day,' he writes to Wolf, 'the study of the Greeks enchains me more. I may say with truth that no study, of many studies that I have taken up, has given me such satisfaction, and I must add that the very shadow of a wish to lead a life of business and activity had never so completely left me as since I have grown somewhat more familiar with antiquity.' Between 1797 and 1802 he travelled a good deal, began to grow interested in languages, and studied Basque. In 1802 he was recommended by Beyme to the King for the post of Prussian Representative at the Papal Court, that post which has been held by so many illustrious scholars. He remained at Rome studying art, translating Aeschylus, and writing original poetry, till the downfall of Prussia had taken place, till Stein had come and gone again, and the Altenstein Ministry had been installed.

He was a man of the type of Goethe, uniting the same prodigious capacity of intellectual enjoyment with a similar theory of culture and a similar serious consistency in carrying it out. But he was eighteen years younger than Goethe, and accordingly the downfall of that artificial world, in which the theory of self-culture had grown up, found him still a young man. The letter above quoted shows that as he had already appreciated so many things, so he could

appreciate the genius for affairs when he saw it in Stein. He is roused to think more of public business, of finance and political economy, than he otherwise would have done; thoughts of duty to the State are awakened in him. But what in writing to Stein himself he expresses with delicate reserve, we find elsewhere more fully uttered. Much later, in writing to Caroline v. Wolzogen about Stein, he says, 'He is admirable for keeping one who is engaged in affairs in the higher region of thought and feeling; he acts on you like one of the old historians or orators, and—since he speaks out of a nearer world—more strongly and more practically. I would at any time give anything to have him near me on important occasions.'

Stein's answer (Oct. 28th) is also interesting.

Your Excellency's valued letter of the 18th has given me much pleasure, as a proof of your friendly and partial feelings; I too am sorry that our acquaintance begins so late, since arrangements might otherwise perhaps have been made to secure for you a position at once more influential and more agreeable. (He has already recommended Humboldt for the post of Foreign Minister.) I am glad that you give a backward glance upon your country and turn your attention to financial and economical subjects. For a man of your intellect and acquirements it will be easy to master this too; for that purpose I think it very useful to study the history of Finance and Public Economy in nations as well as scientific principles. It is so instructive and interesting, and an important part of the history of States, even if you understand by that only the history of international relations. Perhaps most has been written about French financial history; some of the principal works are Forbonnais, *Considérations sur les finances de la France*, two Vols. quarto: Ganilh, *Sur le Revenu Public*, not to mention the history of particular epochs, as of Law's System in Visa, and the extravagances of the Revolutionary Period.

We have here an unusually clear view of the course of Stein's reading.

But at the time when Stein exerted this stimulating influence upon him, W. v. Humboldt had already finished the work which was to make him memorable in the history of Prussia. We shall find him again active in diplomacy, and even in internal politics, but never again as in 1809, 1810, achieving what is unique in its kind. In Prussian history, the year between April 1809 and April 1810 belongs to W. v. Humboldt almost in the same way that the period between October 1807 and November 1808 belongs to Stein.

If he does not appear among the Heads of Departments in this Ministry, this is owing to the peculiarity, above noticed, of Stein's administrative scheme, which had now come into operation. In that scheme the Department of the Interior was of enormous extent; perhaps one reason of Count Dohna's unexpected failure in office was the unmanageable extent of his duties, and we may conjecture that, when Stein planned it so, he looked forward to holding the Department himself for a long time. The Minister of the Interior had under him as Chiefs of Sections several officials who have since been raised into independent Heads of Departments. Among these Sections was that of Cultus and Public Instruction, which again fell into the sub-sections of Cultus and of Public Instruction. Humboldt was the head of this section, and at the same time administered by himself the sub-section of Public Instruction, while the other sub-section, that of Cultus, was administered by Nicolovius. He

stood himself to Dohna in the same position in which Nicolovius stood to him. Niebuhr had been in like manner Chief of a Section in the Financial Department of Altenstein. We have seen that since the middle of Stein's term of office, when it began to be clearly perceived that reform must extend far beyond mere organisation, and must in some sort become reformation, education had been much discussed. Fichte, partly because he could not venture to speak his mind openly on politics, had preached the necessity of reforming education, and his ideas, we have seen, had had their influence upon Stein. In the Political Testament much is said on this subject; and that Stein himself felt strongly about it appears from the fact, that we find him engaged, during his exile, in writing a Memoir on Primary Education in Austria. But his Ministry had passed without legislation on the subject; and there was danger that the inaction which began after his departure would hinder this discussion from bearing any fruit. But the Providential man appeared in Humboldt, as great a master of the science and art of education as Scharnhorst was a master of the organisation of war. Not only was he himself, as a scholar and an investigator, on a level with the very first of his age, not only had he lived with precisely those masters of literature, Schiller and Goethe, who were most deliberate in their self-culture, and have therefore left behind most instruction on the higher parts of education, but he had been specially intimate with F. A. Wolf. It is not generally known in England that Wolf was not merely the greatest philologist but also the greatest teacher and educa-

tionist of his time. While the most eminent scholars, Böckh, Bekker, Heindorf, acknowledged that they owed everything to his teaching, he had himself theorised and written upon education, and is probably the most eminent authority to whom the advocates of a classical education can appeal, and the theorist who has most successfully justified, on rational grounds, the classical system. Formed by such teachers, and supported by a more intense belief in culture than almost any man of his time, Humboldt began his work in April, 1809. In primary education Fichte had already pointed to Pestalozzi as the best guide. One of that reformer's disciples, C. A. Zeller, was summoned to Königsberg to found a normal school, while the reformer himself, in his weekly educational journal, cheered fallen Prussia by his panegyric, and wrote enthusiastically to Nicolovius pronouncing him and his friends the salt and leaven of the earth that would soon leaven the whole mass. It is related that in the many difficulties which Zeller not unnaturally had to contend with the King's genuine benevolence, interest in practical improvement, and strong family feeling, were of decisive use. When Zeller was on the point of retiring in despair, the King determined himself to judge with his own eyes whether the objections made against the new system were well founded. One morning at eight o'clock, without giving any notice—but we learn that the Princess Louise Radzivill had contrived the day before to give Zeller a hint of what was likely to happen—the King with Queen Louise and, as we are told, the whole Ministry walked into Zeller's Institute.

It was no ordinary royal visit, for Frederick William stayed till one o'clock examining everything with the utmost minuteness. The result was that he was brought over once for all to the reformer's side.

The reform of the Gymnasias was also highly successful. Süvern here was among the most active of those who worked under Humboldt's direction. In deference to the authority of Wolf the classics preserved their traditional position of honour, and particular importance was attached to Greek. Wolf himself, it is to be noticed, was called in by his friend and disciple. In February, 1810, he was nominated Director of the Scientific Deputation which had been attached by Stein, as we remember, to the Department. But nothing came of this nomination, and Wolf resigned in March. The man of genius was eccentric, quarrelsome, despotic, and had none of the mastery in deliberation which he showed in teaching.

But it was on the highest department of education that Humboldt left his mark most visibly. He founded the University of Berlin; he gave to Europe a new seat of learning, which has ever since stood on an equality with the very greatest of those of which Europe boasted before. We are not indeed to suppose that the idea of such a University sprang up for the first time at this moment, or in the brain of Humboldt. Among all the losses which befell Prussia by the Peace of Tilsit none was felt more bitterly than the loss of the University of Halle, where Wolf himself had made his fame. Immediately after the blow fell, two of the Professors of Halle made their way to Memel and laid before the King a proposal

to establish a High School at Berlin. This was on August 22nd, 1807, or some weeks before Stein took the reins of Government. At the same time Wolf wrote to his friend Beyme, 'The voice of Germany calls for it. But in thinking only of what is at the moment possible and easy for the State to do in a literary point of view, I have found that we may make a whole crowd of virtues of necessity.' On September 4th came an Order of Cabinet, in which it was declared to be one of the most important objects to compensate the loss of Halle. It was added that neither of the two Universities which remained to Prussia, those of Königsberg and Frankfurt-on-the-Oder, could be made to supply the place of Halle, Königsberg being too remote from the seat of Government and Frankfurt not sufficiently provided with means. At Berlin a University could best, and at least expense, be established. Accordingly all funds which had hitherto gone to Halle were to go for the future to Berlin, and assurances were to be given to the expelled Professors which might prevent their talents being lost to the country.

A University is not founded in a day, and accordingly while Stein held office the design did not pass beyond the stage of discussion. Was it desirable that a University should be planted in a great capital and close to the abode of the Government itself? Some sort of tranquil retirement had been associated with the idea of a University, and the temptations of a great capital might be dangerous to the morals of the students. We are told that Stein was at first led by these considerations to declare vehemently against placing the new Uni-

versity at Berlin; but that, after listening to Wolf's arguments, he went round to the other side and supported the choice of Berlin with equal vehemence. It was of course easy to show that the University could be established more cheaply there than elsewhere. Nearness to the Government would hardly strike an Englishman as likely to make any difference either for good or for evil, but Government in Prussia is altogether different from Government in England; and Humboldt himself, as well as his brother Alexander, for some time believed that the shadow of it would blight the intellectual vitality alike of teachers and of learners. The counter-consideration which in the end outweighed this scruple will surprise English readers even more than the scruple itself. It was judged that the mischievous influence of the Government upon the University would be less considerable than the beneficial influence of the University upon the Government, for 'what can be more desirable than a constant intercourse between the heads of science and the principal officials! how intellectually refreshing, thought-awakening, and naturally elevating, is such intercourse likely to prove to the latter!' It is added that this anticipation has been abundantly realised.

Humboldt sent in his Report on May 12, 1809, and on August 16th followed the Order of Cabinet assigning to the new University, along with the Academies of Science and Art, an annual dotation of 150,000 thalers, and the Palace of Prince Henry as its residence. During the rest of his term of office Humboldt was occupied in negotiations with

eminent men of science all over Germany, whose services he hoped to procure. He was certainly not unsuccessful. He secured Fichte for Philosophy; Schleiermacher, De Wette, and Marheineke for Theology; Savigny and Schmalz for Jurisprudence; Friedländer, Kohlrausch, Hufeland, and Reil for Medicine; Wolf, Buttman, Böckh, Heindorf, and Spalding for the Study of Antiquity; Niebuhr and Rühs for History; Tralles for Mathematics (Gauss refused the invitation). The University was opened at Michaelmas of 1810, and as the first result of it the first volume of Niebuhr's *Roman History*, opening so vast a field of historical speculation, was published in 1811. I give a table of the number of students matriculated annually between 1810 and 1830, where the reader will remark the striking effect produced by the War of Liberation in 1813, and also the list of annual Rectors, which may be compared with the lists of Vice-Chancellors at Cambridge and Oxford:

| Rector. | | Number of Students Matriculated. | |
|---------|----------------|-------------------------------------|-----|
| 1. | Schmalz | 1810 | 458 |
| 2. | Fichte | 1811 | 312 |
| 3. | v. Savigny | 1812 | 194 |
| 4. | Rudolphi | 1813 | 129 |
| 5. | Solger | 1814 | 345 |
| 6. | Schleiermacher | 1815 | 336 |
| 7. | Link | 1816 | 519 |
| 8. | Marheineke | 1817 | 551 |
| 9. | Weiss | 1818 | 610 |
| 10. | Göschen | 1819 | 424 |
| 11. | Lichtenstein | 1820 | 531 |
| 12. | Wilken | 1821 | 724 |
| 13. | v. Raumer | 1822 | 623 |
| 14. | Hoffmann | 1823 | 779 |
| 15. | Rudolphi | 1824 | 920 |

| | Rector. | | Number of Students Matriculated. |
|-----|--------------|------|-------------------------------------|
| 16. | Böckh | 1825 | 854 |
| 17. | Lichtenstein | 1826 | 859 |
| 18. | Hollweg | 1827 | 906 |
| 19. | Klenze | 1828 | 1031 |
| 20. | Hegel | 1829 | 1085 |

Certainly this reform, made in such a manner at that particular time, is not the least memorable of the events recorded in this book. Altogether in that period of German history the relations of literature, or rather culture in general, to politics are remarkable and exceptional. There had been a most extraordinary intellectual movement, a great outpouring of genius, and yet this had taken place not, as according to some current theories it ought to have done, in the bosom of political liberty, but in a country where liberty was unknown. And as it was not the effect, so the new literature did not seem disposed to become the cause, of liberty. Not only was it careless of internal liberty, but it was actually indifferent to national independence. The golden age of German literature is the very period when Germany was conquered by France. 'While storm and thunder roared so appallingly in France,' writes Freytag, 'and blew the foam of the approaching tide every year more wildly over the German land, the educated class hung with eye and heart on a small principality in the middle of Germany, where the great poets thought and sang as if in the profoundest peace, driving away dark presentiments with verse and prose. King and Queen guillotined—Reineke Fuchs. Robespierre with the Reign of Terror—Letters on the æsthetical Education of Man. Battles of Lodi and Arcola—Wilhelm Meister, the

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Horen, the Xenien. Belgium annexed—Hermann and Dorothea. Switzerland and the States of the Church annexed—Wallenstein. The Left Bank annexed—The Natural Daughter, and The Maid of Orleans. Occupation of Hannover—The Bride of Messina. Napoleon Emperor—Wilhelm Tell.' So far literature and culture seemed a doubtful benefit, and might almost be compared to some pernicious drug, which should have the power to make men forget their country and their duties. Not unreasonably did Friedrich Perthes console himself for the disasters of Germany by reflecting that at least they had brought to an end 'the paper time,' the fool's paradise of a life made up of nothing more substantial than literature. In Humboldt's reform we have the compensation for all this. Here while on the one hand we see the grand spectacle of a nation in the last extremity refusing to part with the treasures of its higher life, on the other hand that higher life is no longer unnaturally divorced from political life. It is prized as one of the bulwarks of the State, as a kind of spiritual weapon by which the enemy may be resisted. And in the new and public-spirited generation of thinkers, of which Fichte and Schleiermacher were the principal representatives, culture returns to politics the honour that has been done to it. Culture confesses that it stands on the basis of the State—*ἡδ' ἐστὶν ἡ σωζοῦσα*—at the moment that the State protests most emphatically that it cannot do without culture. In Humboldt and his great achievements of 1809, 1810, meet and are reconciled the two views of life which found their most extreme representatives in Goethe and Stein.

CHAPTER IV.

THE LAST STAGE OF PRUSSIA'S HUMILIATION.

THE last chapter brought before us some symptoms of recovery in the Prussian State. We saw her elude a cession of territory, regain an able Minister, and with a rare elevation of thought occupy herself in the midst of her distresses with the reform of education. It might almost seem that the worst was past, partly because of these more hopeful signs, partly because it is not easy to conceive a nation brought lower than Prussia had been since September, 1808. Indeed one of the arguments of the war-party in that year had been that Prussia had nothing more to lose. But it proved otherwise; and Napoleon now, in the years from 1810 to 1812, succeeds in humbling her much further and subduing her much more completely.

By the Treaty of Tilsit she had lost much, by the breach of the Treaty of Tilsit still more. In September, 1808, it had been arranged that she should yield the same submission as hitherto without giving Napoleon the trouble of coercing her with an

army. All this time her trade was destroyed by the Continental system, her wealth was drained from her, and her creditor appropriated all the fruits of her reforms, financial and industrial. What more could be taken from her? What more could she have yielded to Napoleon, if she were actually annexed to France?

Certainly, in some respects, she would not yield so much. Napoleon could not tax his own subjects in money so heavily as he taxed the Prussians. But his favourite tax, the blood-tax, was not yet imposed on Prussia. He had reduced the Prussian army to an insignificant force, but how much better to appropriate it and avail himself of it in his own wars! Again, the Prussian territory still intervened awkwardly between him and Powers he might desire to strike, and he could not, under the conditions of the Treaty of 1808, provision his armies quite as freely from the resources of the Prussian territory as from those of his own Empire. Or at least if he did so he must use force, that is, he must employ troops on this service which he might want elsewhere.

For the complete satisfaction of his wishes with respect to Prussia, it would be necessary that he should have the same rights over the country as if it belonged to him, but at the same time no more duties to it than if it belonged to another sovereign. He would like to avail himself of all its wealth and of its military force, and to apply these purely to his own purposes, though those purposes might be adverse to all the interests of Prussia, and to do all this without sacrificing for the object any force. It might seem incredible that such a project should

even be conceived, yet it was not merely conceived but in the main realised with respect to Prussia by Napoleon in 1812. We must not pause in this place upon the internal legislation of Hardenberg during these years, memorable as it was. Suffice it to say, that to those Edicts of October, 1810, which have been described above, there was added the Edict of September 11th, 1811, entitled, 'On the Regulation of the Condition of the Peasantry,' by which the peasantry became absolute proprietors of two-thirds of their holdings, ceding the other third to the lord in redemption of the services due to him, and the Financial Edict of September 7th, 1811, by which a kind of Income Tax was established; and that, in accordance with the King's promise made in 1810, Representative Assemblies at this time came into existence, the Provisional Representation between February 23 and September 19, 1811, and the Interimistic National Representation from April 1812 to March 1815, an institution which however disappeared again in the reaction which followed the Peace. But at present we must turn our attention away from these internal concerns and fix it upon the crisis which was visibly approaching in foreign affairs.

After the failure of Austria in 1809 no resistance to Napoleon seemed any longer possible; and the period commences which is conventionally described as that of the intoxication of power. We picture him as henceforth simply indulging in the luxury of omnipotence, annexing territory after territory merely from lust of rule, and at last attacking Russia as the only Continental Power which remained erect.

But his aim is really more definite than it appears at first sight. In his annexations, in his menaces of war, and finally in his Russian Expedition itself, he has always the same design in view, namely, to carry into effect the Continental System. Hence it is that the annexed territories, except in the case of the Canton Valais, are coast-lands, as Holland, the Hanseatic Towns, Lauenburg, &c. Hence it is that acts are committed which otherwise could only be explained by a total failure of foresight and common sense on the part of Napoleon. Such was the seizure of Oldenburg, by which he gave a mortal affront to the Czar, the dethronement of his own brother in Holland, his quarrel with Sweden, the old ally of France, and now actually governed by one of his own Marshals. The Continental System in a manner forced him to these extreme courses; and if it was evident that they made his Empire an insupportable incubus upon mankind, we need not suppose that he was unaccountably blind to what every one else could see; we have only to suppose that he imagined England already reduced to the last extremity, and that his system, if only vigorously executed while it was maintained, would not require to be maintained much longer. Evidently it must be maintained vigorously or abandoned altogether, for English manufactures and colonial goods were like a flood, which will come in through a crack as easily as through an open door. This reflexion explains the breach with Russia. It seems to have been simply what it professed to be; Russia's partial abandonment of the Continental System was not merely a pretext but the real ground of the war.

Napoleon had no alternative between fighting for his System and abandoning the only method open to him of carrying on war against England. How much this thought possessed his mind may be judged from his language to Krusemarck on December 17th, 1811, that is, at the moment when he was pressing his humiliating alliance on Prussia. He said, 'If this Alliance is concluded, people will say the Emperor means to avail himself of Prussia and destroy her afterwards; and so forth. I declare that I want nothing of Prussia but the acceptance of the Continental System.'

The shadow of the coming struggle between France and Russia began to darken the world soon after Hardenberg took the helm of the Prussian State. December 1810 is the date of the decisive occurrences which led to it; on the part of Napoleon the annexation of Oldenburg and on the part of Russia the ukase by which the Czar modified his adhesion to the Continental System. At this point then begins for Prussia a most anxious struggle, which lasts until the very eve of the Russian Expedition itself. It is another form of the same question which has occupied her foreign politics all along from the days of the rivalry of Haugwitz and Hardenberg, the question of a French or a Russian Alliance. Since the Treaty of Tilsit the question has been answered for her. She has been forced into the position of a humble client of Russia, pardoned by France at her intercession. But the threatened rupture of that Treaty opens the question again, and forces her, though under the most unfortunate conditions, to answer it for herself.

The case seemed at first sight to stand as follows. By joining Napoleon Prussia would enable him to begin his campaign at the Niemen and to carry it on entirely in Russian territory. In this way she would probably—so it seemed at that time—secure to Napoleon the victory and also save her own territory from becoming the arena of the war. She would not however save her territory from being flooded with French troops, who would certainly take advantage of her helpless condition to absorb all its wealth in passing. Nor would she save herself from the reproach of helping to destroy an ally to whom she owed something and was at heart friendly, for the benefit of her own remorseless enemy. But by far the most important consideration was that she would establish Napoleon's power finally and expose herself, denuded of the last protection, to be treated as he should decide, perhaps to be annexed, perhaps to lose all her coasts and to become with the remainder of her territory an insignificant member of the Confederation of the Rhine. But if, which it was difficult to imagine, Napoleon should fail, she would be exposed to the vengeance of Russia and the war would roll back into her territories. On the other hand if she sided with Russia, it was certainly probable that she would suffer much. Though the war might begin on Napoleon's side of the Elbe, it was scarcely possible but that much of it would be waged in Prussian territory. Still, with tolerable good luck and the help of England, it might end in a considerable improvement of Prussia's condition, if not a restoration of her greatness; in any case it would be honourable

to Prussia, and the most complete defeat, it is always to be borne in mind, could not reduce her much lower. Even if the Government should be overturned and the King driven into exile, he would still find himself in the company of the House of Bourbon and the House of Orange, and might look forward with as much hope as they to restoration. Thus, so long as the case was argued abstractedly, the expediency of joining Russia appeared plain. The worst consequences that could follow from taking that course were not clearly worse than the best that could be hoped from taking the other.

But when the matter was looked at in the concrete, it was less easy to come to a clear decision. In the first place the decision had to be taken at a moment when it was not yet certain, but only probable, that France and Russia would go to war, and when it was still less certain that the war would be a serious one. Experience warned the King to beware of coalitions with Russia against Napoleon. Thus he writes to Hardenberg on April 4, 1811, after listening to the Russian proposals made through Czernitcheff: 'All this reminds me of 1805 and 1806, when the Emperor's Court was seized with the same excitement. I am much afraid that the final result will again be an ill-combined war, bringing misfortune to the friends of Russia instead of delivering them from the yoke which oppresses them.' But if the recollection of 1805 and 1806 created misgivings, what shall we say of the recollection of 1807? What should guarantee Prussia from a second Treaty of Tilsit? How did she know that the two Emperors might not a second

time make up their quarrel at the expense of their ally? Hardenberg was naturally alive to this possibility, for it was he whose hopes had been dashed and whose prospects, as a public man, had been for a long time ruined by the sudden apostasy of the Czar at Tilsit. Accordingly we find him several times in the first months of 1811 laying stress upon the untrustworthy character of the Czar. Accordingly, though keenly alive to the danger of a French alliance, yet we find him in April and May favouring at least tentative proposals to France, while Scharnhorst, maintaining firmly the principles of the war-party of 1808, stands by Russia.

But in the middle of June the King's advisers received clear information of a fact which materially affected the controversy. The Czar had given in answer to the King's inquiries the strongest assurance of his friendship. He held that the interests of Russia imperatively demanded the preservation of Prussia. To attack the one country was to attack the other. He should regard, he went so far as to say, the first hostilities against Prussia as a declaration of war. But he went on to state what qualified the effect of this assurance in the most startling manner. This was that he proposed to carry on war upon the system which had proved so successful in the hands of Wellington, and to execute long retrograde movements ending in entrenched camps. Put together, the two declarations conveyed that if Prussia were attacked, Russia, instead of flying to her assistance, would begin by standing perfectly still and would afterwards withdraw her armies far into the interior. The Czar was obliged to

acknowledge that on this system he could not prevent Prussia from being overrun by the French, but this, he said, would not destroy the State. Entrenched camps, he said, should be formed at Colberg and Pillau. These would detain a large part of Napoleon's army and so give the Russians a better chance, while the successful advance of the Russians after the enemy had been foiled by retreat would in the end set them free again. Prussia, in fact, was to be as Spain; it was to allow itself for a time to be submerged by the tide of invasion, which was to sweep over it into Russia; but as the French invasion, after sweeping over Spain into Portugal, had not only ebbed back out of the latter country, but had also subsided very much in the former, and seemed likely to leave both as a consequence of being checked in one, so might it likewise be frustrated in the North.

It is to be observed that in these discussions, which filled the year 1811, the magnitude of Napoleon's expedition is reckoned much below what it proved actually to be; instead of nearly half a million of men, it is guessed at 200,000. Moreover, in the contingency of the Russian defensive system failing, what would be the fate of Prussia if, after allowing her territory to be completely overrun and accepting the position of an enemy to France, she should see the Czar put his signature to a Peace?

It was natural, therefore, that the Prussian politicians should at least wish to discover what terms they could command from the other side. The necessity which knows no law might excuse them even for contributing to the destruction of Russia,

if it was positively the only way of saving Prussia from destruction, and it might be urged in addition that the conduct of Russia in 1807 and since had not been such as to entitle her to gratitude. Now might not Prussia fairly expect from Napoleon large concessions in return for a compliance which strained her conscience so far and which must be to him so invaluable? For was it not of priceless importance to him to be able to begin his invasion at the Niemen instead of the Elbe, and with Prussia helping instead of opposing him? Scharnhorst estimated the gains of Napoleon by the alliance of Prussia as follows (in a conversation with Metternich, December 3rd, 1811):—‘It gives him 100,000 men, with 300 field pieces, and eight fortresses well armed and provisioned for six months; it deprives Germany of the hope of recovering her independence, enables Napoleon to call Poland to arms, makes it impossible for Russia to wage any other than a defensive war, and will ultimately have the effect of determining England to withdraw herself altogether from Continental affairs.’ In return for this might not Prussia fairly ask something of Napoleon?

But Napoleon had to consider two things. First, was it safe to make the concessions Prussia would ask, for these concessions would of course include the restoration of the fortresses he still held and the cancelling of the restriction upon her military force? In other words, was it safe to untie the hands, and put weapons within the reach, of an enemy whom he had reduced to despair? Frederick William might perhaps be trusted even to this extent, but since 1808 a new spirit had been roused

among the people, which might make it impossible for the Government to restrain them. The insurrection after the fashion of Spain, which had been so much talked of, might break out as soon as restraints were removed ; it would not indeed be very formidable in itself, but it would have precisely the result which an alliance with Prussia was intended to avert, for it would compel Napoleon to begin at the Elbe instead of the Niemen.

And secondly, was there any occasion for him to make such concessions to Prussia in return for her valuable alliance, if he could get the valuable alliance without making them ? This he had a good prospect of doing, for valuable as the Prussian alliance might be to him, he could do perhaps pretty well without it, while Prussia could scarcely do without his alliance. To him the absorbing question was, how to begin at the Niemen. On October 29th St Marsan said to Hardenberg and Golz, ' Whatever respect the Emperor may have for the military resources which Prussia can offer him, he does not consider that he needs them ; he lays more stress on the means which the Prussian administration might afford him of bringing his army like a rushing stream to the Niemen.' Now for this purpose the help of the Prussian Government was not absolutely indispensable. Napoleon had provided himself with an alternative, in making such arrangements that he could immediately take possession of the whole country with an overwhelming force. He had reinforced, in contempt of all his engagements, his garrisons at Danzig and on the Oder. His troops could march at almost a moment's notice from the

Duchy of Warsaw, and from the Kingdom of Westphalia; Davoust on the Elbe receives abundant reinforcements and reiterated charges to be ready to march in twenty-four hours. No doubt the invasion of Russia would have been seriously impeded by the necessity of keeping military possession of Prussia and perhaps holding down insurrection there, while Napoleon himself was on his way to Moscow; but it might be done, and, what was more important, the possibility of it could be used as a threat in negotiating with Prussia. That thundering diplomacy in which Napoleon delighted could be used. Whatever terms St Marsan might be charged to propose, he could always be instructed at the same time, if they were not instantly accepted, to retire and make way for Davoust at the head of 200,000 men.

Accordingly the first proposals made by Prussia to France in May, 1811, asking for the restoration of Glogau, a reduction of the contribution, and the cancelling of the restriction on Prussia's military force, in return for an offensive and defensive alliance, were for a long time left unanswered.

At last it was explained that Napoleon could not, in the critical state of his relations with Russia, offend her by such an alliance, and it was intimated that the demand for the restoration of Glogau, which indeed Napoleon was already bound to by the Treaty of 1808, was 'inopportune.' The Prussian politicians were agreed that this behaviour betrayed Napoleon's hostile intentions. They proceeded to use what means of intimidation they possessed; it was resolved to arm, and a Commission was ap-

pointed to take the necessary measures ; and when St Marsan made complaints, Hardenberg replied (August 26th) that Prussia armed because France had refused the alliance ; that she armed *for* France if France would renounce hostile intentions and offer an honourable alliance ; that the King desired nothing so much as the confidence of the Emperor Napoleon and was absolutely at his disposal if war should break out ; but that he was commissioned to declare that if that confidence was not to be gained, if in case of war his territory should be overrun, he should consider himself dishonoured before the eyes of Europe, and in that case should prefer, even without hope of success, to fall with arms in his hands.

Napoleon refused to listen to threats, but allowed himself in the month of September, on condition that the Prussian military preparations were suspended, to be led into negotiation. At last, on October 29th, St Marsan stated the French conditions of alliance. They were strict execution of the Continental System, maintenance of the Treaty of September, 1808, with the exception of the restoration of Glogau, and with alteration of the number of troops to be furnished by Prussia in case of a war with Austria from 16,000 to 24,000, furnishing of 20,000 men in case of war with Russia, and of two ships of the line and a frigate against England, free passage in case of war with Russia on the whole line of operations from the Elbe to the Oder and from the Oder to the Weichsel, on which river no Prussian troops were to be stationed. The French authorities were to be at liberty, without interfering with the civil administration, to levy

requisitions in bread, meat and forage, the payment of which was to be settled by an arrangement. The Emperor does not object to Silesia being declared neutral, as the King had proposed, and will even bind himself to refrain from marching through it. Prussia was already so far intimidated that the King finds these proposals milder than he had expected.

But Hardenberg still stood firm. He remembered no doubt the position he had held in the latter stages of the former war, and the Treaty of Bartenstein. He referred expressly to that period in his Memoir of November 2nd, and said that Prussia's position was now less disadvantageous. He recommended closing with Russia, forming relations with England, negotiating with Austria, making counter-proposals to France, and in the meantime that the King should take refuge in Silesia.

But the difference between this crisis and that of the Treaty of Bartenstein was, that on the former occasion Russia had been an active and now she was determined to be only a passive ally. The Czar stood firmly on the defensive and would not even help Prussia by occupying Warsaw. What was to be expected from England and Austria? Scharnhorst, who had just returned from an almost fruitless mission to St Petersburg, was now sent to Vienna, and the King laid it down that unless the help of Austria was distinctly and positively promised the French alliance must be accepted. The mission to Vienna also proved vain. Metternich refused help, though he declared that Austria would not go with France and that her interests were closely bound up in those of Prussia, and though he recommended

Prussia to accept the proposals of Russia, unsatisfactory as they were. England meanwhile would give nothing beyond arms and ammunition, alleging that her Spanish enterprise occupied her wholly. Evidently therefore the times were very different from those of the Treaty of Bartenstein.

The year 1812 has now begun, and Napoleon's object is nearly accomplished. He was favoured by a circumstance of which perhaps he was ignorant, viz. Russia's systematic passiveness. This left no resource to Prussia except in the popular insurrection. In the first weeks of January a controversy went on at Berlin upon the expediency of resorting to this. Baron Jacobi declared that the French alliance would be the moral if it did not prove the physical death of Prussia. Ancillon, tutor to the Crown Prince, argued that though it was a very grand thing for a people to sacrifice life and property for its Government, yet it was very dangerous to introduce such a system by decree, because it might easily lead to a Revolution and so to a military despotism. He held that only a republic and not a monarchy had the right of imposing such sacrifices. He believed that Napoleon would consent to considerable modifications of his proposals. Gneisenau replied that such a Revolution was only to be feared if the people felt themselves deserted and betrayed by their natural leaders. And then he repeated the question, so unanswerable yet always put aside, whether Napoleon was likely to keep his engagements, and whether the Treaty of Tilsit had been kept. He added, Has Ancillon considered that it is positively dishonest for us to make our-

selves responsible for provisioning an army of *two hundred thousand men*?

Such were the anxious discussions in which the Prussian politicians were busied while the year 1811 passed over them. To realise them by reading, and still more by writing, of them in a country which for so many centuries has suffered no invasion, creates a feeling of painful astonishment. A brave and most intelligent nation has no choice but between a passive submission to foreign conquest and an active submission in some respects more slavish still, by which its own Government saves the conqueror the expense of conquest and its own army fights against its dearest interests. Well may Hardenberg, a man certainly of courage as well as intelligence, have said to a friend of Ompteda the Hanoverian, 'Can you fancy what it costs me to support the pitiful part I now play before the eyes of all Europe?' Yet after the example of Stein's fall he had perhaps no choice but to wear at least the mask of absolute obsequiousness towards France. It is for this purpose apparently that he avoids taking openly the Foreign Department and occupies himself before the public with legislative schemes and the hubbub, so new in Prussia, of Parliamentary discussion. Nothing could reassure Napoleon more than the outward appearance of the Prussian administration. Golz was a Foreign Minister who could give him no reason to regret Haugwitz; characterless, governed by his wife, and in close relations with the Westphalian Court. But the real Foreign Minister, Hardenberg, more firmly fixed in the King's confidence than any Minister the King had

yet had, and commended to him, it is said, by the last injunctions of Queen Louise, who was lost to Prussia, with almost all else that was precious, in this dark period (July 19th, 1810), approached in his real views pretty near to the war-party of 1808. Thus there was, as we are told in an interesting letter of Ompteda's written in March, a double Cabinet, consisting of a secret and a public part. 'The Chancellor,' he writes, 'in virtue of the new organisation, takes the principal share in the business of the Foreign Department, and Count Golz has really only a subordinate position. There is no mistaking that Baron v. Hardenberg reserves to himself the most secret political relations, and does not venture to confide them to Count Golz.' Corresponding to these two parties in the Cabinet there were two parties in the nation, the same parties which had come into existence at the time of Stein's fall, but now concentrating their interest upon the subject of the approaching war.

The question occupies all minds, and opinion is divided on it. To all appearance the majority would vote for a union with France, and this disposition is not merely caused by the bitterness and contempt of Russia that has arisen in most minds from recent occurrences, and which must needs be completely balanced by a bitterness against France, which prevails more and more; it is chiefly the effect of a conviction that at the outbreak of a war between Russia and France, no free choice as to joining it would be left to Prussia, surrounded as she would be in the north and west by the French armies stationed so near, in the south by the Saxons ever ready to march, and in the rear by the large force of Poles, even before hostilities had commenced. On the other side there is a not altogether insignificant party, though consisting chiefly of young people from the military and civil services, who will positively hear of no alliance with France, and think on the contrary

that they see the salvation of Germany and Prussia in a war between Russia and France. Their plan is, at the first serious appearance of hostilities between the two Powers mentioned, to draw speedily together the available Prussian troops, and with them either to secure the Elbe by a rapid advance, so as both to take up by that means an imposing position against the enemy, and also to put themselves in a condition to receive the help they might expect in such a case from England; or else, if this should not be practicable, to withdraw with all the troops into a position behind the Oder or into Silesia, and thence to threaten the French troops and raise insurrections in their rear. They would like best to see their king at the head of the troops, but if he should want resolution, they seem disposed to carry out their plans in the revolutionary fashion and overthrow every one who would oppose them. Whether the means of this party are adequate to their objects may be greatly doubted, and there seems to prevail in their secret machinations more good will than reflexion or coherence. At the head of this party stands here in Berlin principally the rich Count Arnim v. Boitzenburg and Major Count Chasot, who was dismissed from his post of Commandant of Berlin when Schill marched out, and since that has not been employed. It reckons besides upon the support of Major General v. Scharnhorst, with whom it keeps up very secret relations. And it is in constant communication with the Ex-Minister v. Stein, who now resides in Bohemia.

It is to be observed that this passage describes the plans of the war-party as they stood before it was ascertained that Russia had resolved upon that defensive system which made Prussia's course so difficult.

Oempteda's remark that the war-party were prepared for something in the nature of a revolution if it should be found impossible to bring the King into the patriotic plans is confirmed by many vague rumours which come to us from the secret societies. It seems there was a plan for forcing the King to abdicate in favour of his brother Prince Wilhelm.

Baersch, a leader of the Tugendbund, even heard a report which implicated Stein in this scheme. He had it from a lady who had heard it from Bishop Eylert, the well-known author of *Characteristic Traits and Historical Fragments from the Life of Frederick William III.* The Bishop had seen much of Stein in his Westphalian days and has given in his book an enthusiastic description of him. According to Baersch he was 'called on (probably in 1809) at the instance of Stein to proclaim Prince Wilhelm King in the Church.' The Bishop reported that 'though he was alone in the power of a fanatical officer he answered with cool resolution, "You may take my life but will never force me to do anything to the detriment of the best of Kings and Queens," and that some time after he received a visit from Stein, who pressed his hand and candidly confessed the goodness of Providence in frustrating a scheme which could only have done harm.' If this story is untrue it is not altogether ill imagined; had Stein resolved upon such a plan it is quite likely that he would have called in the help of the clergy and the Church.

The 'rich Count Arnim v. Boitzenburg' mentioned by Ompteda may perhaps be considered as Stein's representative in Prussia at this time. His wife was an elder sister of the Frau vom Stein, and he had been long a warm admirer of his brother-in-law. As early as March, 1807, at the time of Stein's first retirement, he had written him a letter of devoted friendship, in which he pronounced him 'one of those uncommon persons who do what is good and right, purely because it is good and right, without

personal regard and without interest,' and 'in his uprightness, firmness, energy, and consistency, all that a man should be.' These feelings did not leave him. When Hardenberg's Ministry began in 1810, he writes to Stein that 'the new state of things is hopeful as far as the internal administration is concerned. There seems a disposition to grasp and follow your views. This is a consolation so long as the circumstances continue which prevent us from seeing at the head of affairs him from whom the inspiration came.' As one of the largest landed proprietors in the Mark of Brandenburg, he naturally took a great interest in the legislative innovations of Hardenberg, particularly in his parliamentary experiment. These innovations were by no means received even by the party of reform with the same enthusiasm with which they had welcomed the reforms of Stein. Hardenberg's personal character seems to have been less inspiring, not to mention that to open a Parliament, especially in a country unaccustomed to Parliaments, must always have the effect of lowering the dignity of Government, through the flood of criticism, reasonable and unreasonable, which it lets loose. Many of Stein's warmest admirers were sorry that Hardenberg should have the support of his approval. Schleiermacher, for instance, writes with many apologies to conjure Stein 'to be on his guard against those who now stand at the head of our administration, and who profess to adopt your views, but in reality only boast in the proper place of your confidence and approval in order to raise their credit, while secretly they take every means of sullyng your memory. I am sure I

am not prejudiced, nay, I think I have no illusions even about your Excellency's self, whom however, of all public men, I reverence most deeply. There is no mistaking that the present Administration has entirely left your course, while the former one only stood still upon it.' To this Stein replies that, 'as far as he can hear, the new measures leave much to be desired, but that the manifestations of public opinion seem to him more culpable still—a pernicious frenzy of half-knowledge, conceit, and egoism.' Count Arnim weighs the merits of the Administration with much impartiality in a long letter to his brother-in-law. 'The Estates,' he says, 'assail the Government with a storm of grievances, of which some are reasonable and well-founded, but others rest on nothing but passion, narrowness, and party spirit.' On the other hand, the Administration has real faults. Since no Council of State has been organised, and there are no Ministers of Finance and the Interior, except the Chancellor himself, 'unnecessary odium falls upon him, and his power gets the appearance of a Vizirship, an appearance which would vanish, if the Central Power which he (*most necessarily*) holds in his hands received more legality, more gravity, from the co-operation of responsible Ministers and a responsible Council, and from official consultation with such bodies. Besides this, it is reported that the people he has round him are not always respectable. The Chief is regarded as noble, but weak; why should he endure a Wülknitz, a Krelinger, and others in his neighbourhood? Moreover a Constitution was promised, and yet, beyond purely provisional arrangements, which seem

only intended to coax our money from us, nothing more has been heard of it, though more than a year has passed and the people have ceased any longer to expect it.'

It is as a leader of the war-party that Ompteda above mentions Count Arnim; and it appears that when in the middle of 1811 Prussia made warlike demonstrations in consequence of Napoleon's refusal of her offer of alliance, Arnim visited Stein at Prag, especially to consult him about the long-meditated Spanish insurrection. But before the final decision of the Government was taken, on the 29th of January, 1812, he died suddenly of inflammation, leaving Stein guardian of his children, one of whom has since been Minister President. Stein writes, 'He displayed a singular fidelity and devotion to me, he did much for me, and the loss to me is great.' A letter is preserved, which has been already quoted, in which Stein strongly urges the importance to his young wards of the study of history, especially of English history.

Napoleon had now by a skilful mixture of intimidation and forbearance brought the Prussian Government seriously to contemplate accepting an alliance which might seem to be considerably worse than a conquest. He had several times experienced that when he pressed his exactions home upon this Government, the stage arrived at last when the decision passed out of the hands of all Ministers into those of the King, and that then he might count upon unlimited submission. It remained to apply a favourite diplomatic contrivance, which he always reserved to the last. On February 22nd

Krusemarck, the Prussian ambassador at Paris, was invited to a Conference by Napoleon's Foreign Minister, Maret, Duke of Bassano. Here he learned that the French armies were already on the march, and that he must sign an alliance on that very day. Napoleon professed to accept Prussia's last proposals with 'some slight modifications,' which of course when they were examined proved not to be slight at all, but of the most serious importance. We see here the device repeated which was employed in September, 1808. The terms are suddenly raised, intimidation applied, and the shortest possible time for deliberation allowed. The calculation is that the ambassador, finding himself without instructions to meet the particular case, will not take upon himself the responsibility of a refusal, considering that it is open to the King to refuse his ratification, and that the King on the other hand, always glad to escape the burden of a positive determination, will not undo, when it has been done by another, what perhaps he could never have brought himself in the first instance to do. Krusemarck struggled in vain; he obtained only twenty-four hours respite, and finally signed the Treaty on February 24th, at five in the morning. The terms of it have been stated in another place. It was almost absolute surrender, and in return for it Napoleon took only the old engagement of the Cyclops, *Οὕτω ἐγὼ πύματον ἔδομαι*. And after having exacted the very utmost, Napoleon reserved to himself another right with respect to the Treaty, which indeed in his negotiations was always understood, that is, an absolute right to break it.

Prussia, in the last days of February and at the beginning of March, presents the appearance of a great ship in the act of foundering. It is a grand ship of war, that has weathered storms and come safely out of many sea-fights, but the end, it seems, has come. The memory of the Great Elector and of the Great King will not now save it. The reforms of Stein, which were to be the regeneration of the State; even the reforms of Scharnhorst, so steadily carried on now for almost five years, in order that the army might once more stand with honour in the field, are in vain. Stein has been driven away long since. The war-party that was created in his time, and of which he was the proto-martyr, is now broken up. Count Arnim is dead; and now Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, Boyen, and others, send in their resignations. Some retire into private life, some leave the country. It was indeed improbable that Napoleon, now absolute master, would allow them to remain any longer. Hardenberg, though it does not appear that his views were changed, had by this time, through the most cautious dissimulation, completely disarmed Napoleon's suspicions. He remained at his post, though surrounded henceforth by the Hatzfelds and Wittgensteins, who were regarded as devoted to France. It would seem that in acting thus he behaved patriotically, and that matters might have taken a very different course in 1813 had the King then found no one among his counsellors with either patriotism or experience, no one who could inspire the Russian and English courts with confidence. But in the eyes of the half-informed public his

conduct wore a different aspect. He seemed to be separating himself from the good cause, and from mere love of office to be acquiescing in the ruin and dishonour of Prussia. It seems to be at this time that Stein lost the esteem for him which he had hitherto constantly preserved. He was at a distance, and much at the mercy of those who corresponded with him from Berlin. These were naturally his own followers, and unfortunately these, partly out of zeal for their own chief, partly out of that eager patriotism which could not tolerate the submission to France which Hardenberg thought himself obliged to simulate, partly out of the offence given to their moral earnestness by his dissolute life, besieged Stein with invectives against him. He resisted for a long time, as we have seen, but for this last degradation of Prussia it was difficult to forgive Hardenberg, if he thought him responsible for it. The next time Hardenberg is mentioned in his letters it is with disparagement and contempt.

On March 2nd a rumour was spread that 15,000 French troops from Magdeburg were marching directly on Brandenburg, and the King thought himself in danger of sharing the fate of the King of Spain. Then came a courier with news of the Treaty that Krusemarck had signed; he was followed by an aide-de-camp from Davoust to ask whether or no the King intended to ratify it. 'It did not need so much,' writes Ompteda, 'to decide such a feeble Government; the ratifications were exchanged here (*i. e.* at Berlin) on the 5th, and the French column from Magdeburg took the route for Stettin.

We have now traced the fall of Prussia from the

beginning to the end. Napoleon has gradually removed all the obstacles that lay in the way. He has long ago effaced the memory of his great failure in Spain; his victory over Austria in 1809 had restored his reputation; his breach with the Czar had relieved him from the necessity of using forbearance towards Prussia. Henceforth it became his object that in his Russian expedition the army and wealth of Prussia should not merely not count on the enemy's side, but should actually count on his own, and this if possible without his sacrificing anything for the purpose. The object was now attained, and it involved to Prussia something much more humiliating than is commonly understood by conquest. The defeat of Russia, now that Napoleon could start as he wished from the Niemen, and carry all the forces of civilised Europe except the Peninsula and the French armies of the Peninsula against a population thin and barbarous and a Government of notorious feebleness, seemed a matter of course. And when Napoleon should return, the last support of Prussia would have been removed, partly by Prussia's own means; and it would be a question of no importance whether the conqueror should find it most convenient to dethrone the House of Hohenzollern altogether, or to make Frederick William his satrap for the Mark of Brandenburg, as Jerome was for Westphalia.

For this final surrender, as for so many weak concessions in past years, the King himself was responsible. He did not at this last moment show the magnanimity which many weak men might have shown, and determine, since he could save nothing

else, to save at least the honour of the nation. And yet, curiously enough, this last proof of weakness, which reduced his most faithful servants to despair and seemed absolutely irremediable, brought with it the end of all Prussia's misfortunes, the restoration of her power, and the foundation of her supremacy in Germany. It is perhaps from this curious turn of fortune that the notion has grown up that Frederick William, in spite of his homely character and of the undeniable weakness of many of his actions, had yet an intelligence when he chose to use it above any of his Ministers. Thus Duncker only expresses the common Prussian opinion, when he closes his laborious and exact account of these negotiations as follows: 'It was Alexander's determination not to cross his frontiers, combined with the behaviour of Austria, which determined Frederick William's course in opposition to the advice of Scharnhorst, Gneisenau, and Boyen, and to that of the Chancellor, who, since the middle of July, 1811, had decidedly counselled adhesion to Russia. The result justified the King's decision, and through it within a short time greater and happier triumphs were made possible to Prussia and Germany than could have attended the opposite course in the most favourable circumstances that can be conceived.'

One can only be glad that Fortune smiled at last upon so thoroughly respectable a man as Frederick William, and even that she determined, by way of compensation for his trials, to give him a reputation for mysterious wisdom. And indeed it is difficult to imagine that any other course than that which he took could have brought about the utter downfall of

Napoleon. In other ways his Russian Expedition might have been frustrated, but not so as to destroy his enormous army completely and shake the very foundation of his power. Frederick William's policy is therefore justified, if mere success can justify any policy. But an action lazily ventured on the chance that something may turn up, ought not to be said to be justified by success because something does turn up. That phrase is only properly applied to actions ventured in reliance upon forces which ordinary observers overlook or underrate. Did Frederick William act as he did because he saw something which his counsellors overlooked? Are we to suppose that, realising more strongly than any of his ministers the force of the popular enthusiasm which would rise against Napoleon in Russia, he said, Let us humour him; our weak resistance may perhaps thwart his schemes, but it will leave his power untouched; yonder in the heart of Russia are explosive forces which may be fatal to him; let us lure the ship into the waters where the torpedoes lie hidden?

The truth is that the conception of such a disaster as now overtook Napoleon had perhaps as yet scarcely occurred to any one. As yet, though he had suffered two great failures, in his Eastern Expedition and in his Spanish enterprise, for the first the Directory was held partly responsible, and he had contrived to be personally absent when the failure was declared, while he had wiped out the latter in public opinion by his subjugation of Spain in 1808. That he should fail where he was personally present and with a great force was a thing for which there was no precedent. Even if he should

partially fail, who so certain as he by his resource and rapidity to make the failure fall as lightly as possible? I do not think that any one can seriously suppose that Frederick William alone saw deeper and arrived by a sort of supernatural foresight at the conviction that Napoleon would fail. The truth is, that a peculiar lethargic hopelessness was his principal characteristic. He looked on the dark side of everything, and had by this time become so accustomed to misfortune that he had almost forgotten how to hope. Of course there were chances, for might not Napoleon die? but of definite probabilities there seemed to be few, and to Frederick William probably they seemed fewer and slighter than to any of his advisers. To all appearance he took the course he did because it was the easiest, and because it preserved to Prussia for a few months a nominal existence. A hand-to-mouth policy, a policy of the same kind as that which from the beginning of the King's reign had brought Prussia yearly lower and lower, turned out in this one instance, and that one the worst of all, wiser than the counsels of the deepest wisdom.

CHAPTER V.

STEIN IN RUSSIA.

THE dark period in Stein's life now comes to a close. At the beginning of the fourth year after his flight from Prussia he was restored to a position like that from which he had fallen, became once more an influential statesman, and took his part in the conduct of great affairs. And this time he was on the winning side. The fall of Napoleon restored him to his country and his property, and the rest of his life was as happy as old age can be.

He was drawn from his retirement in just the same way as in 1807 at the beginning of his great Ministry. Now as then a prince in extreme need asked his help. On May 19th, 1812, when Napoleon on his way to Russia was already at Dresden, the Prince Ernst v. Hessen-Philippsthal brought to him at Prag the following letter from the Czar Alexander.

The esteem I always felt for you was not impaired by the occurrences which led to your removal from the direction of affairs. It was the energy of your character and your extraordinary talents which procured it for you.

The decisive circumstances of the moment cannot but unite again all right-thinking people, friends of humanity, and of liberal ideas. The question is of rescuing it from the barbarism and servitude which are preparing to swallow it. Napoleon would complete the enslavement of Europe, and to this end he must subjugate Russia. For a long time past we have been making ready for the resistance and collecting the most effective means of defence.

The friends of virtue and all who are animated by the feeling of independence and love for humanity are concerned in the issue of this contest. You, Baron, who have distinguished yourself so gloriously among them, you can have no other feeling, but a wish to contribute to the success of the exertions which are making in the North to overcome the aggressive despotism of Napoleon.

I invite you most pressingly to impart your thoughts to me, whether in writing by a sure hand or orally by coming to me at Wilna. Count Lieven will give you a passport for this purpose. No doubt your presence in Bohemia might be of great use, since you are posted, so to speak, in the rear of the French armies. But it is as good as certain that Austria's weakness will range her under the French standard, and this might endanger your safety or at least that of your correspondence.

I charge you therefore, to weigh maturely the importance of all these circumstances, and to decide as seems to you most expedient for the prosperity of the great cause to which we are both attached. It is not necessary to assure you that you will be received in Russia with open arms. The sincere dispositions which I entertain towards you, may serve to you as a sure guarantee for that.

ALEXANDER.

St Petersburg, March 27th, 1812.

It may surely be said that seldom has any exile received a more cheering letter. If it be the bitterest mortification of a condition like that which had for the last three years been Stein's, to feel how soon the greatest achievements are forgotten and how little the most important man is missed,

the Czar's letter must have soothed such wounded feelings with the most delicate consolation. Then he was wanted after all! He was almost a necessary man!

Had the need of him been felt in Prussia, it would have been less surprising and less flattering. Or again it would have been less surprising that the Czar should have sent for him to reform his corrupt official hierarchy or to take in hand his unfortunate finances. But now he was sent for in extreme need—when certainly no empty compliment could be intended—by a foreign prince whom he had seen but once or twice, and whom he had then met and treated as an opponent; he was sent for not merely as an expert or specialist, but in a crisis of Russian and European policy, because that foreign prince had received the impression and had retained it for three years, that here was a man who might be consulted in difficulty, that here was a character and a judgment beyond the common. No doubt the Czar asked him to put himself in some danger. Had Napoleon succeeded in Russia, as it was at that time generally expected that he would, it might not have been easy for Stein to escape his vengeance a second time; but we may imagine that he did not set any great value upon such a life as he had lately been leading, and that with his views he would not care to live longer when civilization should have received such a fatal wound as another Napoleonic triumph would inflict upon it. He replied thus:

I received on the 19th instant, the summons with which your Imperial Majesty honoured me under date 27th March, to range

myself under the standard of honour and true glory, that is, under your own. I obey it, although I prepare myself for new persecutions against which your Majesty will know how to protect me. I shall set out on the 27th, the day on which I shall receive my passport; I hope to be in Wilna on June 10th (New Style), there to receive the commands of your Imperial Majesty and to present to you the homage of my reverence and devotion.

It was in the critical month, when the war between the French Empire and Russia which had long appeared inevitable was actually coming to the birth, that this correspondence passed. It is to be observed that the Czar's letter for some reason did not reach Stein till more than seven weeks after it was written, yet its language implies that before the end of March Alexander regarded war as close at hand, and has already decided to go to Wilna, that is to the head-quarters of his army. He went thither in April, and on the 27th of that month his ambassador at Paris, Prince Kurakin, presented the Russian ultimatum. Though for the moment no answer was given to it, yet through the whole of May it may be said that war has begun in all but the name. Napoleon is at Dresden and Alexander at Wilna; if hostilities have not yet commenced, it is only because the military preparations are not quite completed on the side of the French. Stein commenced his journey on May 27th, and two days after Napoleon left Dresden to take the command of his army. Stein reached Wilna on the 12th of June, two days later than he had expected, and on the 25th of the same month Napoleon crossed the Niemen.

The relation which now began between Stein and the Czar proved of considerable importance to

both: To Stein it opened a new career which reached to the end of his public life, and enabled him in a good degree to realise, though by different means, those schemes for the deliverance of Germany the first agitation of which in 1808 had cost him his office, his citizenship and his property. Let us endeavour to understand what at the outset were the views which led Alexander to invite Stein and Stein to accept the invitation.

It is not perhaps difficult to read what passed through Alexander's mind as he wrote the letter which has been given above. We can imagine what sort of impression he must have formed of Stein's character. He had been brought into contact with him just at that crisis of his Ministry before the unfortunate letter appeared. The question then under discussion between the patriotic party of Prussia and the King had been laid before Alexander for arbitration, the question whether Prussia should put herself at the head of an insurrection in Spanish fashion against the French conquerors. He may have read some of those reports which have been given above, in which Stein's curt and nervous style rises into grandeur. He knew with what indignation Stein regarded his own conduct on that occasion, with what singular imperiousness he called on him to help Germany, warning him that Russia would certainly be attacked next, and also that with her feeble and corrupt administration she would not be able to withstand Napoleon. He and Stein had had a personal conference upon the subject, and it is a thousand pities that no account is preserved of that

conference. For Stein always appeared most commanding when he was angry, and particularly when he was angry with some one of great rank, as a king or an emperor. The following description deserves to be read if it be not forgotten that it is the description of a poet, Ernst Moritz Arndt:

His brow, and even also his glance, were seldom overshadowed with the mist of displeasure, or at any rate the gloomy thunderclouds of anger; there shone almost always the clear bright Olympus of a ruling self-conscious intelligence: but below, about cheek, mouth and chin, quivered the quick irritated feelings, so as really to make you think of the wrath of a lion. He almost always approached people, even ordinary people that had only ordinary matters to put before him or to say, with a most friendly seriousness, and yet his bearing filled most with timidity and confusion. He was by God's will a man of the tempest, made to sweep clean and to overthrow, and yet Almighty God had put also into the faithful, valiant and pious man, delightful sunshine and fruitful rain for the world and for his people.

I remember the short description Savigny gave of him at Reichenbach when he had seen him for the first time: What a grand splendid Sultan figure have I seen in Stein! I dare say there is a little of his friend Niebuhr's opinion in this expression. Yes, he was an imperatorial, a kingly man,—a Sultan figure if you like—all Sultans have not made use of bowstrings. It often seemed to me too, that he would find it hard to serve, and must always stand in the first place.

Arndt adds the following testimony to his effectiveness in speech:

His speech and language corresponded to his character; firm and terse it flowed from his mouth, even in strong excitement and bold passion his words never tumbled up against each other or jostled one another in confusion. Straight on and Straight on, was his motto. Courage and truth found always the place and the right word; they would never consent to

move in crooked or tortuous paths, nor for all the treasures in the world put Yes for No at will. Had this man as Minister had an open free Parliament before him, he would assuredly have passed for a thundering overwhelming orator, with his invincible courage and his virtue and force.

If we would avail ourselves of this passage to imagine the impression Stein may have produced on Alexander, let us by all means bear in mind that it is the language of poetry and enthusiastic friendship, but on the other hand let us reflect that if ever he was impressive in bearing and in speech it may probably have been at his conference with the Emperor in September, 1808. He never held a more important conversation, he never argued a cause on which more depended, or on which he felt more deeply; he had before him the man on whose will everything turned, and whose selfish policy at the moment excited his indignation. Alexander, if any one, was likely to have seen those twitchings about the mouth and chin, and to have heard that terse speech flowing so steadily, like lava, even when hot with passion. We can easily understand that a lasting impression was made upon his mind; and when we consider the substance of what Stein had said we shall be ready to believe that it would have occurred to the Czar's remembrance in the spring of 1812 even if it had not been said impressively. 'It has been said,' writes N. Turgeneff, 'that Alexander recalled at this critical moment some prophetic words which the Baron vom Stein had uttered in his hearing just before the Peace of Tilsit.' And indeed the words he had uttered not before Tilsit (when he was

at Nassau) but before Erfurt had proved prophetic. Alexander had betrayed Europe to Napoleon in 1809, and now he was attacked himself. The punishment of his policy was this, that the most formidable army of which trustworthy history makes mention, commanded by the most successful of leaders, now stood on his frontier. Stein had predicted this, and he had predicted at the same time that Russia would not be able to withstand the attack. Perhaps the Czar thought with some remorse of what he had done, and at the same time with increased admiration and interest of the statesman who had prophesied so truly. Perhaps it occurred to him that what Stein, in 1808, had planned for Germany was now wanted in Russia, and that Napoleon could only be resisted by a national rising in the Spanish fashion. In such a case, what more desirable than to have at his side the energetic and experienced author of the scheme, one who seemed made for a War Minister?

But if such were the feelings of Alexander when he wrote the invitation, what were those of Stein when he accepted it? We know what he had been accustomed to think of Alexander and of Russia's chances of success in a war with Napoleon. He had written in August, 1808:

That thinly peopled country, devoid of industry, will make but a feeble resistance, and a country ruled by a weak sensual prince (intimidated by the failure of a number of schemes abandoned as lightly as they were undertaken) through the agency of a stupid, awkward, corrupt and meddlesome bureaucracy,—a country where the great mass of the nation are slaves—such a country will not long maintain the fight against civilised Europe.

He was scarcely likely to have changed this opinion since, for Napoleon's expedition far surpassed in magnitude anything that could have been conceived in 1808, at which time the period of enormous armies was but beginning. No doubt an ardent nature does not acquiesce, when the crisis actually comes, in such hopeless calculations. He was buoyed up by his natural courage and by his religious faith, so that we shall find him throughout this trying year supporting the hearts of all by his sanguine confidence of success. Still, it is only ultimate success he looks for, and he regards it as quite possible that he may have to make a further journey eastward, say to Astrakhan. When now at Prag he thought calmly over the Emperor's summons, it may probably have seemed to him to be very similar to that other summons he had received five years before at Nassau. That was a summons to help a ruined sovereign; this was a summons to help a sovereign just about to be ruined. That came after Jena; this came before it. And if soon after his arrival at Alexander's court, some great catastrophe like Jena should happen, and Alexander (known to Stein as a 'weak, sensual and fickle prince') should break down again as he had done at Tilsit, and sign a peace which should be to himself what Tilsit had been to his ally, where would Stein be then? It is plain that in accepting the invitation he took the dangerous course. He abandoned a life which, though obscure and melancholy, was free from danger, for one in which he might plainly expect to find new calamities. But this we may suppose he deliberately

shut his eyes to. Where was the use of calculating the consequences of Napoleon's success? If Napoleon succeeded again, that was the twilight of the Gods;—

From that hour

There's nothing serious in Mortality;
The wine of life is drawn, and but the lees
Is left this vault to brag of.

But unfavourable as the chances of the campaign might seem for Alexander there were forces which might be disimprisoned to make war against Napoleon, and Stein was the Aeolus who watched the cavern in which they slumbered. Varnhagen tells us that his departure for Russia made an immense sensation at Prag, and we can well believe it. That German insurrection over which he brooded required the stay of some foreign Power. He had long looked to England to perform for Germany the same service she had rendered to Spain. To England he looked always and by no means believed that Russia could supply her place. But undoubtedly the help of Russia was worth having, and he could certainly, as the Czar said, do more for the German insurrection at St Petersburg than at Prag.

These were the immediate prospects with which Stein set out for Russia. We may perhaps imagine that he contemplated other and remoter possibilities.

It is to be observed that Russia, like many other States of the Continent, was ripening towards reforms of the very same kind as those which Stein had introduced so successfully into Prussia. Indeed, just as the violent and lawless revolution of France was repeated in most of the countries where Na-

pooleon penetrated, so might the peaceful and reconciling revolution to which Stein had shown the way have been repeated. It is certain that he was not so sanguine as to think that he would at once or soon have an opportunity of furthering such reforms, for he began his course in Russia by declaring that he had nothing to do with Russian politics, and had come merely to look after German interests; nay, according to Turgeneff, he went further, and said that without a knowledge of the Russian language and life which he was too old to acquire, he could not hope to do anything for Russia; but this reserve was no doubt in part prudential, and easily reconcilable with hopes of gradually acquiring a position in which he could promote reform. It is probable that he expected Russia's trial would last longer than it actually did, that the Government would be reduced very low, and only by degrees, and after a struggle of several years, succeed in making head against the enemy. Had it proved so, the Czar might have been driven to great reforms, as Frederick William had been, and indeed as the second Alexander in our own time was driven after the disasters of the Crimean war; and then Stein, not perhaps as actual Minister, but as confidential friend and Mentor of the Czar, might have been of the greatest use.

None of these possibilities was realised. In the first place, Stein did not give any help in the conduct of the campaign by undertaking any of the duties either of Minister of War or Minister of Finance. If anything of this kind was intended, the invitation reached him much too late and the

war was too short. The invasion began within a fortnight from his arrival in Wilna, and before the end of the year, that is in six months, the French army was with the armies of Tamerlane, and Napoleon was rubbing his hands over a Paris fire. After this, Stein bade farewell to Russia, and the rest of the time during which he attended on Alexander was spent in Germany and France. The questions which occupied him had no concern with the reform of Russian institutions, but were questions of foreign policy, diplomacy and strategy: From what states is help to be looked for?—how far shall we carry the war?—shall we march on Paris? What attention he did give either to war administration or to the reform of institutions, was devoted, we shall find, to the benefit not of Russia but of Germany.

In the main his second appearance on the public stage is sharply contrasted with his first. There we saw him introducing a period of domestic reform and pushing foreign affairs and diplomacy into the background. Now, whatever may have been intended, he does exactly the opposite. We shall hear no more of legislation until at the Congress of Vienna he takes part in the discussion of a new Constitution for Germany. For three years we shall find him devoted to foreign policy and war administration. Nor does it seem that he takes less interest in this than he had taken in domestic reform, although it has happened that his achievements of 1808 are now almost alone remembered. It is by no means clear that he thought with less pride and pleasure of his share in the overthrow of

Napoleon than of his reconstitution of Prussia. At any rate in his autobiography it may be noticed that he becomes at this point rather more than less diffuse, so that he gives twice as much space to this period as to the former, and in a letter written to his wife from Paris just after the fall of Napoleon he remarks, 'I have thus come to the end of a very interesting passage of my life.' Indeed if the other was the useful this was the triumphant passage, and moreover the reconstitution of Prussia would have been of small avail if Napoleon had not been overthrown. But we must also bear in mind what has been remarked above, that the temperament of Stein was really more military, more active and stirring, than would be gathered from the character of his best known achievements. The share he was permitted to take in the campaigns of 1813, 1814, was a compensation to him for the failure of his attempt to kindle a War of Liberation in 1808. It may perhaps have seemed to Stein a complete and satisfactory compensation. The rising against Napoleon was far greater than any he had dreamed of, and was successful beyond all expectation; and if Stein's own part in it may seem insignificant, so that in most histories of the fall of Napoleon his name is scarcely mentioned, it may be remarked, first that he stood out conspicuously enough at the time in the eyes of his countrymen at least, and secondly that he seems to have been most sincerely indifferent to his own celebrity. What he found interesting in this passage of his life was not the sense of his own importance, but the pleasure of contributing to the overthrow of

Napoleon, and thus in his autobiography, though it would be most satisfactory to find distinctly marked how much he considered to be due to his counsels, yet little of such information is to be found, so careless is he about his own claims.

Hitherto the scene of this biography has been limited, so that we have scarcely ever had occasion to look beyond Germany and not often beyond Prussia. It is fortunate for it that just when the scene expands so as to include Russia, and indeed all Europe, Stein's activity begins to be limited in another way by being restricted to foreign and war policy. Hence we are not called upon to discuss the internal condition of Russia or enter into its constitutional, administrative, and social history. Stein's personal relations with the Czar, and the relation of those German interests which the former represented to the Russian interests represented by the latter; these are the only new matters which need be introduced into his biography at this point. It is also fortunate that the period of his absence from Germany may be summarily despatched, for of the campaign of 1812 Stein, newly arrived at the Russian Court, was almost a passive spectator, and he returned to Germany at the beginning of 1813. On the whole therefore, it will be possible for our narrative to observe pretty well the unity of place, and the reader need not for any considerable time lose sight of Germany.

When Stein reached Wilna, he had seen pass before him the armies which were to withstand Napoleon. He remarks that there were only 136—140,000 men ready to resist 400,000, though

further reserves were on the march from the interior. He had also had time to think over the position he would assume with respect to the Emperor. Accordingly, when upon his arrival Count Nesselrode waited upon him, commissioned from the Emperor to inquire what he wished, he was ready with the answer, that he had no intention of entering the Russian service: it appears that appointments were ready for him, either in the Department of Finance or in that of Public Instruction; but that he wished only to take a share in German affairs, which were likely to be affected by the war, in a manner useful to his country. 'By this declaration,' he tells us, 'I gained freedom to act on my convictions, and dissipated in the minds of the Russians all suspicion that I aimed at posts or influence, and all disfavour. To this position, and to the Emperor's goodness, I owed it that during my residence in Russia I was treated by the inhabitants, and especially Count Kotschubei, with friendliness and good will.' Count Kotschubei was Minister of the Interior. When he received an audience, he tells us, 'the Emperor received him very graciously, and explained to him in a long conversation, the reasons which had constrained him to the Peace of Tilsit;' (and at the same time, we may suppose, apologised for the conduct that had displeased Stein so much before Erfurt)—'and expressed his unalterable resolution to carry on the war with the greatest perseverance and energy, and rather to endure all the dangers and calamities it might bring, than to make an ignominious peace.'

What was at this time Stein's impression of him whom he had hitherto regarded as a 'weak, fickle and sensual prince'? Pertz gives it as follows, from a paper of Stein's, but in such a way that it is difficult to be sure how far the words are those of Stein and how far of his biographer :

His appearance is agreeable; refined and regular features, graceful bearing, the inclination of the head (being hard of hearing, he puts forward the left ear as the better) not disagreeable. The principal feature of his character is good-nature, friendliness, and a wish to contribute to the happiness and elevation of mankind. His tutor, Laharpe of Geneva, early imbued him with respect for man and his rights, which at his accession he earnestly endeavoured to realise. The Emperor began with educational institutions, improvement of the condition of the peasant. But he wants the intellectual force to investigate the truth, the firmness to carry out his resolutions in spite of all hindrances, and to constrain the wills of those who disagree; his good-nature degenerates into weakness, and he is often obliged to avail himself of the weapons of craft and cunning, in order to carry out his objects. These last qualities have been developed by the lessons of his preceptor Field Marshal Soltikoff, an old courtier, who early instructed his pupil in compliance with his grandmother, her favourites, and with his father's humours, while the despotism of his father could not but confirm him in these habits.

Such is the description, which shows us that Stein had not been induced by the high personal compliment he had received from Alexander to change materially his opinion of him. Weak, fickle, somewhat cunning; this is the substance: on the other hand, he is now allowed to be good-natured and well-meaning. Much the same character might have been given of Haugwitz, or any other of that set which had been Stein's special aversion. This does not promise well, but it is remarkable that his

estimate afterwards rose greatly. When he returned to Germany in 1813 he astonished and scandalised his friends by his unbounded confidence in Alexander's good faith; he was charged with Russianising, and his letters of that time are full of his respect and admiration for Alexander, a feeling which is not extinguished by the gradual divergence of their views, which began about the time of the fall of Napoleon. It is certainly much to Alexander's credit that he inspired a most clear-sighted observer who began with a prejudice against him with such a firm good opinion.

Stein's position is now this. He holds no office, but he is ready to be consulted and to advise the Emperor in all matters relating to Germany. Such a position was the safest which could have been taken up at the outset, and if later he should see his way to attempting more, it was a position which could easily be exchanged for a more influential one. In the meanwhile Alexander could not be forbidden to consult him on matters which did not strictly affect Germany, and in point of fact we find Stein reporting on finance, on the expediency of an English alliance for Russia, and on the qualifications of the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs. But there was probably at this time good reason to think that the function of adviser on German affairs would prove to be no sinecure. By German affairs he means something very definite, nothing else indeed than that insurrection after the example of Spain which had occupied his thoughts so long. He hopes to raise Germany in Napoleon's rear, and to bring over to the good cause some or all of the

150,000 Germans who marched into Russia under Napoleon's standard. Had the war been longer than it was, had there been any considerable interval between the triumph of the French when they entered Moscow and the utter ruin of their army, we may imagine that this scheme might have taken effect. A long and doubtful struggle within Russia or on its frontier would have given Germany time to interfere decisively by such a general insurrection as Stein meditated. As it was the decision came too soon, and Napoleon's army perished completely before Germany was able to rouse itself. Accordingly the agitation which Stein directed from Russia had no immediate result and only helped to ripen Germany for the events of 1813.

Before we consider the business with which he was occupied it will be convenient to trace the course of his movements in Russia. He did not stay long at Wilna, which was evacuated by the Russians on June 28th and entered by Napoleon the next day. At this time the Russians did not contemplate the long retreat into the interior which actually followed, and which is sometimes represented as the cunning device by which Napoleon was lured to his destruction. Their plan was to retreat as far as the Duna and there to defy him in a fortified camp at Drissa, which was to be Russia's Torres Vedras. Accordingly we find Stein next at Drissa, whither he went in company with Count Kotschubei. Here within the camp a hot military controversy now raged, in which we do not learn that he took any part. The whole plan of operations which had been adopted

was called in question, and Alexander became convinced that his levies were utterly and even contemptibly insufficient. We are also told by Stein that several of the Generals combined to beg him either to take the direct command of the army or else to quit it altogether. He quitted it accordingly, and hurried to the two capitals of his Empire in order to call his people to arms. Stein followed him and arrived in Moscow on July 24th. The ancient city was to stand little more than two months longer, and Stein was among the last travellers who beheld it.

Moscow (he writes) is more an assemblage of cities than a single city; it exhibits a mass of buildings in the most different styles, magnificent palaces, wooden houses, buildings in the bad style of the declining Roman Empire mixed with the Eastern style; others in the best taste of modern architecture; the greater part of these great buildings surrounded with gardens which are often very large; (Rasumofsky's is 42 acres). The population of the town numbers 370,000 souls and is very industrious and busy, hence the traffic in the streets is exceedingly lively, particularly in the great squares, where all the shops are collected, since business goes on exclusively in the shops, not in the houses.

He does not seem to have been pleased on the whole with the manners of the society into which he was thrown at Moscow; all the more welcome must have been the glimpse of another social world which he caught on returning from a short expedition into the country, when he writes—

I found Madame de Stael, but without coming to speech of her. On my return I found a most cordial invitation from her, but did not get it till midnight, when she was already in bed,

and so I must postpone this acquaintance until she arrives in St Petersburg.

But though not pleased with Moscow society, he was greatly struck by the patriotic ardour of the people, the more so, we may be sure, because he remembered the tameness of Berlin in 1806. Rostopchin, the famous Governor of Moscow, had not misunderstood Stein's character when, in a note which has been preserved, he proposes to Stein if he has *any curiosity to see an Emperor adored by his people* to come to the Chateau at ten o'clock. The autobiography records what effect the spectacle produced upon his mind.

I followed him (*i. e.* the Czar) to this immense and wealthy capital, where in the innumerable crowd that streamed in from every side, was displayed a high degree of religious and national enthusiasm, and all classes vied with each other in testifying this enthusiasm by furnishing money and militia, and thus expressing their devotion to their Emperor. The spectacle of the multitude surrounding and almost worshipping him, the piety with which they crowded to the churches and prayed with fervent devotion, was heart-elevating, inspiring.

In his laconic style he bestows only these two emphatic epithets upon a spectacle which evidently impressed him deeply. It is perhaps necessary to add some interpretation of his feelings. We must not suppose that what he found so inspiring was merely the sight, rather curious than edifying, of a half-barbarous people's superstitious reverence for their despot. What he witnessed was in fact the great decisive event of the time, and that which he of all men in Europe was in the best condition to appreciate. He witnessed a new phase of the Anti-Napoleonic Revo-

lution, which was to falsify his own prediction that Russia would not be able to resist Napoleon's attack. He saw the Spanish movement repeating itself in Russia. What he had hitherto seen both at Wilna and at Drissa must have confirmed all his earlier forebodings and prepared him for a catastrophe like that of Jena. The armies were altogether insufficient in numbers, and there was the same dissension and confusion of ideas among the generals that he remembered in 1806. Who could doubt that Napoleon would triumph over such armies? And so he did. But when he had done so what was to follow? Would his entrance into Moscow have the same consequences as his entrance into Berlin in 1806, or would it be like his entrance into Madrid in 1808? That is, would it be followed by a Treaty which would seal the subjugation of Russia, or by an interminable war which would wear out the resources of Napoleon? By those two epithets, *heart-elevating, inspiring*, Stein, I take it, means to say that what he witnessed at Moscow decided this question for him. It was remarked that in the critical months which followed, Stein, though he had before predicted that Russia would certainly be overcome, was the most hopeful man in St Petersburg. One Job's post after another arrived and one courtier after another went over to the Peace Party, but Stein's joyous confidence only rose higher and higher. In him, as it was said of Cromwell, hope shone like a fiery pillar when it had gone out everywhere else. This, I imagine, was not merely the flash struck from a heroic nature by ill-fortune.

It was the insight of one who had learned the lesson of the time. He had perceived that Napoleon's commission was against states that were not also nations; and what he had witnessed at Moscow, the explosion of enthusiasm where the very serf devoted himself for the country that oppressed him, while the great nobles, a Soltikoff and a Dmitrieff-Mamonoff, offered to raise whole regiments at their own expense, had taught him that Russia was not among these artificial states, but that she was of the type of Spain, one of those great spiritual fabrics which are state and church and family in one, and which therefore are well-nigh invincible even when barbarous, even when corrupt.

Alexander left Moscow for St Petersburg on July 31st, and Stein followed him on August 2nd. He stayed for two days at Twer on a visit to Prince George of Oldenburg, of whom we shall soon hear more. He arrived at St Petersburg on the 9th. This is the end of his wanderings in Russia. He did not leave St Petersburg except for excursions to places at a short distance, until he left it for Germany at the beginning of 1813.

These excursions occupied the first few weeks after his arrival before the cold weather set in, and the St Petersburg season began. He visited his friends the Kotschubeis at Czarskoe Zelo, where he had a good opportunity of seeing the old country palace in which the great Czarinas of the 18th century, the two Catharines and Elizabeth, had lived; the Orloffs at their villa on an island of the Neva, and the Narishkins. With Count Orloff he seems to have formed—what was rare with him—a sort

of literary friendship, for the Count wrote in a letter of later date :

I have no doubt in your moments of leisure you read our common friends Tacitus and Thucydides ; I mean to come and read them with you at the Schloss Stein, and we will throw in Homer and Aeschylus.

But for this passage I should have doubted whether Stein read Greek, and the only other passage which describes him as doing so makes me doubt whether it was not a new study taken up at this particular time to relieve the tedium of his Russian life. We are told that at St Petersburg he often found the time hang heavy on his hands, and that he sent for a certain Gräfe who was a Professor of Greek Literature, and read Thucydides with him. Perhaps Count Orloff may have once or twice been present at these readings. At Narishkin's house he had at last the pleasure which he had missed at Moscow, and made the acquaintance of Madame de Stael. He does not seem to have been attracted by her appearance. He finds something

quite plain in her mouth and something very passionate in her eye, and in her behaviour much indiscreetness, though at the same time marks of good-nature and simplicity. She has her daughter with her, not at all pretty, but simple and good, besides Herr Schlegel and a young man, her friend as it seems. She thinks of taking her son to Sweden ; perhaps there she will print her book on German Literature. I do not think she will take here, for there is no taste here for literature, and the ladies are extraordinarily indolent.

Again he writes :

Madame de Stael has been very well received by the

Empresses; she passes for a good plain woman; but she is not asked to table because it is against usage to invite strangers; exceptions are a very great favour, only granted at this time to Admiral Bentinck and me.

Again :

I have passed an extremely agreeable day at Count Orloff's; we were a small party on his island: after dinner Madame de Stael read us some chapters of her book upon Germany—she has rescued a copy from Savary's claws, and means to have it printed in England; she read the chapter on Enthusiasm; it moved me strongly by its depth and nobleness of feeling and elevation of thought, to which she gives expression with an eloquence that goes to the heart; perhaps I may copy out for you some passages, and enclose them with this letter (Stein was fond of copying out the passages in books which took his fancy); I am sure they will touch and elevate you.

He copies and sends the chapter on Enthusiasm, and means to copy more if the authoress stays longer. But on Sept. 8th he writes,

Madame de Stael left us on the 7th, she is going to Stockholm to find an appointment for her son: her company was very agreeable, and I am sorry for her departure.

On the 15th of August Stein had a visitor whose appearance is more important to the readers of his biography than it was to Stein himself. Hitherto our sources have been almost exclusively official documents, and we have often had occasion to regret that no intimate friend who had watched his life with interest and stored up his sayings has left us any account of him. We have felt the want of a Boswell, and now arrives one who undertakes in the most explicit manner to supply the want. Ernst Moritz Arndt, the famous author of the 'German Fatherland,' arrived in St Peters-

burg on the day above-mentioned, just when Stein was writing down his first impressions of Madame de Stael. From the moment of his arrival he saw much of Stein, and it was in fact he who copied out for the Frau vom Stein the chapter on Enthusiasm from Madame de Stael's book. The relation continued until they left Russia together. It grew closer, though it was oftener interrupted, during the war in Germany; and for the rest of Stein's life Arndt was on the list of his friends, and a frequent visitor at Nassau and at Cappenberg. He lived to be a very old man, and in the year 1858—his eighty-ninth year—was prevailed upon by Bunsen to write down his reminiscences of one whom he regarded as 'the second Arminius and political Martin Luther of Germany.' Accordingly appeared 'My Wendings and Wanderings with the Imperial Baron Heinrich Karl Friedrich vom Stein.' It has a dedication to Bunsen, which begins, 'Here, honoured friend, you have at last your *Bothwell of Auchinleck* with and about Stein.' It would be unjust to comment on this sentence by quoting *Quid dignum tanto feret hic promissor hiatus?* for it is evident that he does not mean to compare his little book to the immortal *Life of Johnson*, but only to the slighter if not more imitable *Journal of a Tour in the Hebrides*. The book is short and yet is by no means exclusively occupied with Stein, and it gives the impression, which Arndt elsewhere confirms, that his admiration for Stein grew upon him somewhat gradually, so that he was not, like Boswell, full of eagerness from the outset to amass materials for the future

book. With these abatements, it is a most welcome aid in the attempt to picture Stein as he lived, and particularly his appearance, bearing, and manner of speech. It is the work no doubt of a worshipper, yet by no means a blind worshipper; and if it sometimes excites a suspicion of a little idealising, it nowhere bears any mark of serious exaggeration. The total of what we owe to it may be said to be some dozen of credible anecdotes, a lively descriptive portrait of Stein himself, with good companion sketches of several of his friends, and for the period of his residence in Russia, when Arndt's means of observation were very good, a really important biographical memoir. As Arndt is not merely one of our authorities, but may also be considered as the most famous of the school of patriots who looked up to Stein as their master, and would have counted it an honour to be called by his name, it will be proper to introduce him formally to the reader by sketching his life up to the moment when he made Stein's acquaintance.

He was a native of the island of Rügen and was thus born a Swedish subject, as he believed himself to be of Swedish descent. The year of his birth was 1769, so that he was twelve years younger than Stein. His origin was not merely humble; it may startle our English notions to hear that the famous poet and patriot had for his grandfather one who lived and died a serf, and that, like Horace, he was the son of a freedman¹. The family had lived as serfs on the estate of Count Malte Putbus, when the poet's father received emancipation, and

¹ Arndt's own comparison, *Erinnerungen*, p. 4.

afterwards became a steward and then a well-to-do farmer. It startles our notions still more to learn that in this family of a sometime serf there was much education, love of literature, much self-respect, and much stateliness and ceremony in the conduct of life. The Freedman himself is thus described :

He was a fine portly man, and had acquired by travel and intercourse with cultivated people as much culture as could be got at that time anywhere in Germany by anyone short of a scholar. In sense and spirit he was superior to most, and in many ways he was cleverer, and wrote his German and his name more correctly and better than most justices (*Landrathe*) and generals of his time. In short, he was an excellent dignified person, at least for the little island of Rugen, and weighing him in the social scale of the place and time ; and he associated with most considerable clergymen, officials and smaller noblemen of the neighbourhood.

The description of manners in this nook of ancient Europe is so curious that room must be found here for an abridgment of it :

On festive occasions the house of a worthy farmer or humble village pastor had the same appearance as that of a Baron or Major *Von*, the same solemnity and ceremony, though no doubt stiffer, clumsier, and therefore more absurd and silly. It was in short the peruke style, the foreign, hypocritical Jesuitical affectation and mannerism, the rococo and arabesque style, which lasted from Louis XIV. to the French Revolution. To this day there is laughter in my inmost soul when I think of the ladies' dressing-rooms of those times.

The men in their way just as stiff, but not so bad. With these the grand images of the Seven Years War had somewhat broken down the foreign fashion. One might fairly call it a parody of Frederick the Great and his heroes....And then the young people ! Even these insignificant creatures could not be let alone. The head suffered a dreadful martyrdom on these

gaudy days; it often lasted a full stricken hour....And when the poor boys came down to the company they had to make the round of it and kiss the hand of each gentleman and lady with the deepest obeisances. But the funniest thing in these imitations of fashionable life was the use of the High German language, which at that time passed in the island quite for something *extra* and unusual, and no wonder, since few knew how to manage it decently, or so as not to break the head of the dative and accusative some hundred times even in a quarter of an hour. It was an indispensable part of good *ton* to stumble along in High German for at least the first five or ten minutes of the commencement and first assembling of a party; not till the first glow of solemn feeling had subsided, did one descend again to the homely *soccus* of one's familiar Plattdeutsch. Here and there too were strewn a few fragments of French, and I remember how it amused me, when I began to learn the foreign language regularly, to think of the Wun Schur! Wun Schur! (Bon Jour) and the à la Wundör! (à la bonne heure!) or of the Fladrün (flacon) as Fräulein B. used to call her water-bottle.

The following extract gives a notion of the intellectual atmosphere in which he grew up:

That was a truly poetical epoch in which our good Germany woke up again after a long dull dream to a genuine literary and poetical existence, and the charm of it was that the people took a much greater part in it than those of this age seem to do. This was the case not merely with men of study and education, but also with simple and unlearned persons such as my parents and others of the same class. We had left Grandison and Pamela, Gellert's Swedish Count and Miller's Siegwart behind, and got Werther's Sorrows and Eschenburg's and Wieland's translations of Shakespeare, and Lessing, Claudius, Bürger and Stolberg were greeted with delight by old and young. In our school my brother Fritz began first to make verses; indeed the youngster set about rendering the Roman History in Dramas. I suppose this set me off too; without him perhaps I should never have written a verse. The fact is, Nature has not given me enough of that flowing and fleeting, fantastic and magnetic fluid that makes a poet, and if I have had some success now and then with single

lyrical trifles, that only makes good the proverb, A blind pigeon finds a pea at times.

Arndt's school was the Gymnasium at Stralsund, and in 1791 he became a student of theology in the University of Greifswald, from which he proceeded to that of Jena, where he listened to Reinhold and Fichte without apparently being much interested. As his aptitudes unfolded themselves, they proved to be those of a traveller and a student of manners and nationalities. He laid aside theology, spent the years 1798 and 1799 in wandering about Europe, and soon afterwards published an account of his travels. In 1800 he became a Privat-Docent at Greifswald, and meeting with much success, rose to be a Professor Extraordinarius in 1806. In 1803 he plunged into one of the leading controversies of that time by publishing his History of Serfdom in Pomerania and Rügen. It excited bitter opposition among the Swedish nobles, but the King came to his help, and in 1806 serfdom was abolished in the Swedish dominions. When the wars of 1805 and 1806 brought the new scourge of Universal Monarchy upon Europe, he declared himself upon this subject also, and thus became enrolled among the pioneers of the revolution which brought down Napoleon, and in doing so gave rise to the nationality struggles which have filled the last age. This he did by the publication at Altona in 1807 of his *Spirit of the Age*.

He gives us the following account of the growth within him of the great conviction of his life :

A few days after my departure from Paris, Napoleon had returned from Egypt. I saw the imperial figure of the age force his way forward, I followed his stratagems and battles, his glories and violences. Did I then clearly understand him? I know not: but after the battle of Marengo, there seized me a dread of this figure, worshipped as it was by so many and such high people: it seemed an unconscious presentiment of the misery of the next ten years. Anger however, anger which often at the sight of the shame of Germany and Europe became rage, came with the Peace of Lunéville and the disgraceful bargainings and chafferings in which Talleyrand and Maret carved out and cheapened the Fatherland's lot and lots. At last the years 1805, 1806 broke down the last props on which a fragment of what was German had seemed able to sustain itself. Now was the utmost realized; everything German, small as well as great, obscure as well as famous, lay now in one great universal heap of misery, and the proud foreign cock crowed his Victoria over the ruins of fallen glory. The time was come when all single feelings and judgments and prejudices and loves and preferences sank together into the great ruin. What kings and Emperors had lost and surrendered the poor had to make up their minds to part with. When Austria and Prussia were fallen after vain struggles, then first my heart began to love them with true love, and to hate the foreigner with true anger. Not Napoleon only, not the crafty, self-contained cynical Corsican, born in the land in which honey is poison, upon whom later, as a great scape-goat, liars have tried to whet the anger of Europe, not him did I hate most or with such rage, but them, the French, the false, haughty, rapacious, crafty and faithless enemies of the Empire for centuries past, them I hated with all my heart, and recognized and loved with all my heart my true fatherland. Even my Swedish particularism died away in me, the heroes of Sweden in my heart became now mere echoes of the past; when Germany through her discord had ceased to exist, my heart recognized her as one and united.

This book speaks out freely enough. In its sketch of Bonaparte we find passages like the following:

Bonaparte understood the people he had to do with. Frank where he could be so safely, secret where his success appeared still remote, mysterious in trifles and like the oracles doubly so in great matters, he could only impose at all upon such a frivolous nation and age. Many went on believing him to be the greatest of republicans and cosmopolitans, when he had long since declared the contrary in plain terms; ay, even now many stand agape as if they were bewitched at his good fortune, and believe him destined for the salvation and emancipation of Europe from all evil. Bonaparte seems to me not at all the man to promote the stiller kind of influence and the more delicate arts; yet other eyes see it differently. Arts and sciences—well! there was room here to do something for them. But it is not the country for them, their first vital organ is wanting, Freedom and a higher sort of honour than the Stars of the Legion of Honour, Senatoreies and pensions can give. This ruler only regards them because the age requires him to do so.

And so on, without any reserve, damning the whole imperial regime first in generals and then in particulars, first as a degrading system of government and then as guilty of the murder of D'Enghien and the disappearance of Toussaint.

We may imagine what the author of such a book had to apprehend, though it was not actually, as has been asserted, for having this book in his shop that Palm the bookseller of Nürnberg was shot by a military commission. Arndt lived an uneasy life at Greifswald, from which occasionally he made visits to Sweden and sometimes in disguise to Germany. He was at Berlin in 1809, and witnessed the return of the King and Queen from Königsberg. When the Russian expedition impended and the whole north of Europe seemed likely to pass at once into Napoleon's power, Arndt no longer considered himself safe, and determined to go to Russia. At the

beginning of 1812 he managed to get a passport from Count Lieven, the ambassador at Berlin. He bade farewell to his family and went to Berlin in February, and then with Count Chasot to Breslau. He remained there till June, when, the war just breaking out, he made his way to Prag. Here he found Gruner, who immediately said to him that the Minister vom Stein, who had been summoned by the Czar to St Petersburg, desired Arndt to go to him as soon as possible, having learned from Gruner that he had already furnished himself with a passport for Russia. Gruner added that he was surprised at Arndt's late arrival at Prag, for he had several weeks before forwarded Stein's message to Breslau, but it appears Arndt had not received the letter. By this time, the war having begun, and Austria, the country in which Arndt found himself, having joined Napoleon, it was no easy matter to cross into Russia; but Arndt found a Viennese who carried on a smuggling trade upon the frontier of Russia and Austria. This man consented to take Arndt into Russia disguised as his servant. In this way, after a long journey by Kief and Moscow, and after having seen many strange things which he has described most vividly—not, the reader should understand, in the 'Wendings and Wanderings,' but in another autobiographical book published much earlier under the title of 'Recollections from my External Life'—Arndt arrived in St Petersburg and stood in Stein's presence. A friendship began which might be expected to be lasting, for it was not founded upon accident but upon a common hatred and sufferings in the same cause—

United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
And hazard in the glorious enterprise.

We can now add Arndt's picture of Stein's personal appearance and bearing to those of Rehberg, Uwaroff and Varnhagen. Some part of this description has already been extracted in the present chapter; the rest may follow now.

The Baron Karl vom Stein was of middle height, rather short and squat than tall and slender, the body strong with broad German shoulders, legs and thighs well rounded, feet with clear instep, all at once strong and fine, marking the man of old family; bearing and gait alike firm and measured. On this body sat a stately head, with a broad receding forehead, as artists tell us the great man often has, the nose strongly aquiline; below, a fine tight mouth, and chin which it must be confessed was a little too long and too pointed.

And be it here said once for all, in answer to those who always come out with the finest white skin and the bluest silver-clear eyes as the genuine mark of nobleness and genius in a man, that the two greatest Germans of the 19th century, Goethe and Stein, observed the world from brown eyes; though there was this difference, that the Goethian eye, broad and open, looked down for the most part with mild radiance upon all around, and upon people, while Stein's eye, smaller and keener, rather gleamed than shone, and at times very fiercely flashed. Usually it expressed friendliness and honesty, but when he was in serious or positively angry mood it was capable of flashing in a formidable manner.

Then follow the sentences quoted above, after which Arndt continues:

His hurricane nature, how liable he was to gales and storms of passion, how at times his impatience made him a slave to fury which might then hurry him to all lengths—this infirmity he was quite conscious of, and at times accused himself beyond all reason, as in fact it was his way, like a truly humble, honest man, not merely to confess it, but also to make compensation

where he thought he had hurt good people by excessive vehemence and irritability. I have known cases enough of this where both myself and others were concerned. Often enough has the brave pious man, speaking of long past years, especially of his youth, in the consciousness of this passionateness which was natural to him and of other fiery inborn impulses, such as whirl and boil in mighty souls, said, 'Believe me, a man should never boast of his nature. We are all poor sinners, as Dr Luther says. There was the stuff for a villain in me, had not my boyhood and youth been curbed by a pious mother and yet more pious elder sister.'

And then his intellect :

He had been a good student both at home and at the High School of Göttingen, had learnt, by reading and travel, the history of his own people and fatherland as well as the histories of other nations, and later, when by his own choice it became his lot to serve in Prussia, had striven with great industry and noble conscientiousness to conquer outright and explore all that his office and duty required of him, and yet many who in other respects stood far below him might excel him in attainments and acquired skill, not excepting even his contemporary and rival, Hardenberg. But there was a something in this intellect, a something that can only be indicated, and not described. What Stein was he was completely and entirely at every instant ; he had at every instant his tools and weapons ready and completely within reach, the revolving barrels of his mind were ever loaded and ready to be fired ; in moments of clearness and vigour there flashed from his mouth not only good sense, but *bon mot* after *bon mot*.

Then follows the description given above of his power of clear and terse expression.

Thus did Stein appear to Arndt after he had known him long. The impression produced by the first meeting is thus described :

I went to my own little room moved and touched by the bearing, manner, and speech of this knightly man, and found

myself puzzling over an access of reminiscences where just the people and things that came to mind would not give themselves a name. This fit of reminiscence and comparison, and the perplexity it caused me, grew stronger in the next days, till all at once I had it, and cried out instinctively, Fichte! Yes! it was my friend Fichte, old Fichte, almost to the life; the same squat figure, the same brow, which in Fichte too at times could shine with clear genial friendliness, the same powerful nose in both, but with the difference, that in Fichte this powerful beak probed the world as if still seeking, but in Stein seemed to belong to one who had already found firm ground to rest on. Both could be friendly, Stein much more so than Fichte, both could look deeply earnest and at times formidable and terrible, and certainly this look was on occasion far more terrible in the son of the German Knight than in the son of the poor weaver of the Lausitz.

Stein was at this time occupying rooms in the Hotel Demuth (Demuth was the name of the proprietor), which he exchanged in the autumn for a grand ministerial palace. It was here that Arndt visited him, and was received with such cheerful warmth, as if he had been a friend of many years' standing. 'I am glad you are come,' said Stein; 'it is to be hoped that we shall find some work to do here.' Arndt was asked to dinner and installed in rooms in the same hotel. He was in a manner taken into Stein's service and made his secretary, receiving a salary from the German Committee, which will be described in the next chapter. What was the work which Arndt was expected to do? The reader will hardly need to be told. When a national rebellion against tyranny was to be roused, a man like Arndt was worth his weight in gold. He had, what was so rare among German literary men, a popular style. He had a passionate interest in politics, but at the same time

he had no political crotchets, no questionable opinions that he was eager to put forward. The Anti-Napoleonic Revolution could not indeed run its course to the end without formulating a special political doctrine, but in its early stages it was summed up in hatred of bondage, hatred of the intrusive foreigner. These were the feelings which Arndt knew how to express, and he had no temptation to mix with them any republican aspirations, which would have ruined the cause by throwing the German princes unanimously into the arms of Napoleon, while he could sincerely appeal to those religious feelings, which with the mass of the people would be more powerful than any others. We can imagine then with what satisfaction Stein had heard from Gruner that Arndt had been procuring a Russian passport, and the eagerness with which he secured his services.

The business which with the help of his new secretary Stein transacted in Russia I reserve for another chapter. In the remainder of the present we may confine ourselves to his social life in St Petersburg, and the influence he exerted there.

Arndt has some notes of Madame de Stael's visit. Of her companion, the great *littérateur*, A. W. Schlegel, he remarks that he did not look like a German, but like a polished and smug French Abbé, in shoes with gold buckles and snow-white silk stockings, and that he spoke for the most part in a very soft whisper, interrupting Arndt's genial thunder with 'Hush! Hush! here in Russia there are ears behind every door and every curtain.' He seems to have often seen Stein and Madame de Stael

together, and thought that they got on very well on the ground of their common hatred of Napoleon, though he remarks that the lady had to put up with frequent attacks upon her nation. No doubt her position as a Frenchwoman was trying at St Petersburg in the crisis of a French invasion. She had a triumph over Arndt when, asking him about a duel in which he had been wounded, she received for answer, 'Oui, Madame, j'ai été percé par un boulet,' upon which she replied, 'Comment, Monsieur? vous avez eu un boulet (*i. e.* cannon-ball) dans le corps et vous vivez encore!' But it was trying to her when she went to hear a play of Racine at the theatre, that the audience raised a cry of 'Away with the accursed French!' and behaved in such a manner that the actors had to make their escape with all speed for fear of ill-usage. Arndt was positively startled at the effect this had upon Madame de Stael's feelings. He saw her on her return throw herself on a sofa, weep, sob, and all but tear her hair, while she went on passionately crying, 'O ces barbares! O mon Racine!' He remarks that it was very German in himself and in his German friends to be astonished at this. It was certainly quite inconceivable that a German matron or maiden should be so excited because a play of Goethe's or Schiller's had been hissed off the stage at London or Paris, but he thinks it would do the Germans no harm to be in this respect a little more like the French or the Russians. *One* German was in this respect very like the Russians, for Stein has an entry in his diary under date September 6th, in which he mentions that he had been to the French theatre,

and found that the public let pass no opportunity of expressing its abhorrence of the French nation and everything belonging to it; he remarks laconically, 'I am of the same way of thinking' (Ich theile diese Gesinnung).

The description given by Arndt of Stein's success in Petersburg society is most glowing and enthusiastic. In fact, when we consider that Arndt was a German among Russians, and under a strong temptation to exaggerate the importance of one who was the representative of Germany, we feel that it would not be wise to lay much stress upon this description. One salon in which he frequently appeared was, we learn, that of the wife of Prince Alexander of Würtemberg, a leading Russian General and now one of the principal military authorities for the campaign of 1812. The Princess was a sister of Leopold of Belgium, and a bosom-friend of the Czarina. In this salon, it seems, there reigned the most remarkable freedom of speech and of political sentiment; it was in fact a sort of political club. Arndt believes that it was Stein whose influence had given it this character. Here appeared often Armfeld the Swede, governor of Finland, noted for the conspicuous part he had recently taken in the overthrow of the all-powerful Minister Speranski, who in Russian history is the great example of the vanity of the statesman's wishes, like Sejanus and Wolsey in the literature of the West; here too Ouvril; and not unfrequently among the crowd of ladies moved, in the strictest incognito, the reigning Empress. After the Princess of Würtemberg Arndt names the Countess Orloff as an

enthusiastic admirer of Stein. She was according to him the most fascinating woman in Russia, and impressed Stein himself much more deeply than the De Stael, so that he was heard to deplore that such a pearl should be hidden away in such a country. But it seemed to Arndt that her admiration for Stein was unbounded, and he remembers to have seen her almost overwhelmed by one of his characteristic fiery outbreaks. She had been enlarging upon the corruption that reigned among the officials both civil and military, and upon the want of proper pride among the nobles, which contrasted so strongly with the valour and patriotism shown by the people. Stein attributed it to the vicious education and disorderly mode of life of the Russian nobles, and turned suddenly upon the Countess with, 'How is morality or discipline to find its way into a country where the children grow up, as they do even in your house, in a Tartar mixture and confusion of all ages and sexes, and never have a glimpse of simplicity, decorum or severity of manners?' He drove the lesson home with all the biting frankness that belonged to him, and until the Countess was dissolved in tears and feminine despair.

Whether he had the splendid social success that Arndt believes, and was the most admired person in St Petersburg, it will be safest to leave an open question. It is in vain that we look in the diaries which he sent to his wife to see whether he thought so himself or anything similar. Arndt says that he scarcely ever talked of himself and his doings, and we have already had occasion to remark that

he seems unable to write about himself even in an autobiography. We are not surprised therefore to find that not even the pretext of gratifying his wife induces him to say a word about any successes, social or other, obtained by him in St Petersburg. But Arndt could not be mistaken when he tells us of the *kind* of influence which he exerted, that in the critical days of the campaign he helped to sustain the hearts of all by the sanguine and triumphant confidence of success which he everywhere displayed. The melancholy calculations of September 1808 were now forgotten; he had understood, as I imagine, that Russia was not to be compared with Germany, but with Spain. He had perceived that Napoleon here had made his old mistake on a greater scale, and had imagined that he had to fight with a weak Government and an insufficient army, whereas he was resisted by a vast population made heroic by patriotism and religion. He had been, in his own language, 'inspired' by this discovery; he had in fact found the element he breathed most naturally. Never before had it been his lot to live where the chivalry, the patriotism and the religiousness which formed the basis of his large and simple character could find free play; till now all these feelings had been choked in the atmosphere of sceptical cosmopolitanism which he had been compelled to breathe. Arndt's account of his brilliant and inspiring hopefulness is therefore highly credible; and indeed it is not only credible, but we may say certain from the nature of things, that the hopefulness of a man of his reputation, experience, and influence with Alexander, must have

produced an important effect upon the public opinion of St Petersburg.

On the day when the news arrived of the burning of Moscow, (writes Arndt,) Stein had invited a midday party principally in honour of the valiant Hessian, Dörnberg, who had just arrived from England. I was to have a seat at the table, as well as a certain official F. whom Stein for the most part thought pretty well of. But that morning before the party he delivered himself about him in this way: 'F. has just been here with a face like a woman's when the first labour-pains come on. I meant at first to ask him too, but when I had heard his honing and moaning about Moscow, and how we should soon have a wretched peace, I thought I would leave the poor devil to himself. Courage, my good friend! Courage is the thing for a man in this world. Who knows but we may have yet to move some hundreds of miles further east, to Kasan or Astrakhan? I have lost my luggage often enough in my life, say three or four times. After all a man can die but once! At any rate, we will drink to good fortune to-day.' And we did drink and clink our glasses to good fortune merrily enough.

The same confidence in the fidelity of the people, the same contempt for those blind Governments which by their suspicion or disregard of the people had betrayed Europe to the universal Tyrant, is shown in the best of these Russian anecdotes, one which it is worth remarking came to Arndt from a Russian informant, Count Uwaroff.

The Empress Dowager was according to Arndt 'a majestic lady in the fifties, sprung from those German Pelopidæ, the House of Würtemberg.' Those who had to attend on her complained of her indefatigable activity, which allowed them no rest, and of her power of standing for hours together without showing signs of fatigue, while all her retinue were fainting round her. This haughty dame, who,

according to Bernhardi, had had thoughts, when Paul was murdered, of repeating the *coup d'état* of Catharine and usurping the crown from her son Alexander. opened her lips at a great festival of triumph given after the failure of the French expedition and said, 'If now a single French soldier makes his escape beyond the German frontiers I shall be ashamed of being a German woman.' At these words repeated Uwaroff, Stein, who was present was seen to turn first red and then white with passion. He stood up, bowed, and said, 'Your Majesty is very wrong to utter such words, and that to the great and valiant nation to which you have the happiness to belong. You should have said, 'I am ashamed not of the German people, but of my brothers, cousins and my set, the German princes.' I have lived through it all; I lived on the Rhine in the years 1791, 2, 3, 4; the people were not to blame, but you did not know how to use them. Had the German Kings and Princes done their duty, never would a Frenchman have crossed the Elbe, Oder, or Weichsel, to say nothing of the Rhine (Niemen?). The Empress had the power to answer, 'Perhaps you are right, Baron, and I thank you for your lecture.'

Thus it is time to leave society, which was at no time a favourite arena of Stein's, and to consider the various occupations in which he was engaged during his residence in Russia.

CHAPTER VI.

THE GERMAN COMMITTEE.

WHAT Stein had immediately in view in going to Russia cannot be better explained than by quoting the first Memoir which he laid before Alexander. It was written at Wilna, and is dated June 18th, that is, the sixth day after his arrival.

As everything announces the outbreak of war, it is necessary to inquire into the possibility of making the resources of Germany available for the service of Russia and her allies ; at present they are at the disposition of Napoleon, and the problem is to find means of dissolving them or of directing them against him by exciting opinion to the point of expressing itself openly against him.

The feelings of the German population are embittered against the present state of things and its author ; it sees its independence, its blood, its property, sacrificed to the interest of the Princes who have betrayed it to prolong an ephemeral existence ; it is oppressed, harassed and insulted by foreign hordes ; it is forced to fight against nations which are either its natural allies or at least stand in no hostile relation to it ; all old arrangements and usages are at an end, and there remains no trace of the happiness enjoyed twenty years ago by this numerous and cultivated nation. The nobility sees itself deprived of its privileges and of the splendid

He goes on to recommend the establishment of a secret journal, to be conducted in Germany by Gruner, in order to counteract the effect of the boastful and lying bulletins with which he expects the country to be flooded as soon as the war begins. He then considers how the enemy's operations may be more directly thwarted.

(1) Couriers passing between the different divisions of the army or between the armies and France are to be intercepted by small guerilla bands of 12—15 men, to be set on foot by Gruner, and stationed in the Tucheler Heath of West Prussia, in the Thuringian Forest near Eisenach, and in the Spessart near Würzburg.

(2) Efforts are to be made to draw off the foreign auxiliaries of the French army, particularly the Westphalians (Stein's favourite people), the Tirolese and the Illyrians. They are to be invited to desert by proclamations which should promise to unite them in corps under officers of their own nation, to restore them to their homes in case of a successful campaign, otherwise to form them into military colonies like the Cossacks, by which means their nationality would be preserved to them, and the State gain a cheap and trustworthy military force. At the head of these forces are to be placed the Dukes of Oldenburg and Brunswick, and Gneisenau, Chasot and others are to be among the officers. By these means not only would a number of good soldiers be gained, but those who did not come over would become objects of suspicion to the French, and so a hindrance rather than a help in their operations.

(3) Relations are to be formed with Colberg and Danzig, where it may be possible to organise a popular insurrection concurrently with a landing of English troops, and so give the English a chance of doing in Germany what they have done in Spain and Portugal.

(4) It may be possible even to detach some of Napoleon's Marshals from his interests. It is certain that after Aspern Soult opened a negotiation with the English, and that in 1807, Desolles, who is now governor between the Elbe and Oder, tried to separate

Lannes from Napoleon. Might he not now be approached through the Crown Prince of Sweden (Bernadotte)?

(5) Lastly, to carry out all these suggestions a special Committee must be instituted.

The Emperor answered this Memoir on the same day in the following words :

I have read your Memoir with the greatest attention, and recognize in it the genius which has always distinguished you. The good cause has gained infinitely in acquiring your cooperation. Now, as you well remark, the question is of carrying out all that your Memoir suggests, and you will render me a real service by occupying yourself with it at once ; I shall try for my part to lighten your labours as far as is in my power. At our first meeting we will resolve upon the most pressing measures.

Two days after Stein had another Memoir ready, pointing out that the most pressing matters were :

(1) The nomination of the Committee.

(2) The sending of instructions and powers to Gruner about the institution of literary organs of discontent in Germany and the reprint of the 2nd Part of the *Spirit of the Age*, and providing Arndt with a passport for Russia. He suggests at the same time that Oubril might be kept in Germany under some pretext as long as possible, remarking, 'He is a very refined, penetrating and painstaking man.'

(3) Getting from the Minister of Public Instruction proposals with respect to the distinctions to be offered to German *savants*. Stein now suggests that in order to disguise the object of this measure, it will be desirable to put upon the list some names of *savants* belonging to the Indifferentist party, e.g. the great philologist Wolf of Berlin, Goethe, Wieland and even the distinguished mathematician of Prag, Gerstner.

(4) The nomination of the commanders and officers of the new corps to be formed out of the deserters, and the choice of centres where such corps are to be united.

(5) The immediate promulgation of an Address, written with gravity and simplicity, announcing *his Majesty's fixed intention to*

emancipate Germany. This address should invite all well-disposed people to range themselves under the Russian standard, and should promise them sufficient pay, union in distinct corps under officers of their own, and ultimately either restoration to their homes or a settlement in the fine climate of Southern Russia. Measures are to be taken to distribute this Address as widely as possible.

(6) The Tirolese to be approached through Speckenbach (Hofer's friend), the Croats through the Russian commanding opposite them, the French generals through Bernadotte, to whom application is to be made by means of Count Löwenhielm.

The suggestion printed above in italics is, it will be observed, new, and it is not more new than startling. What is here proposed was, we know, actually accomplished by, or at least under the leadership of, Alexander. Readers of history are liable to a peculiar illusion, which makes them take all the principal events as a matter of course and assume that because they did happen therefore they must have happened. Particularly in the case of the fall of Napoleon is this illusion yielded to. When he had once failed in Russia it is generally taken for granted that a march of the Russians into Germany, a rising of the Prussians, the adhesion of Austria, the overwhelming of Napoleon by superior numbers, the pursuit of him into France and the fall of his power could not but follow, and that the only thing surprising in the story is the obstinacy of his resistance. We shall have many opportunities of observing how mistaken is this view in every particular, and that nothing but incredible perversity on the part of Napoleon and a series of miraculous accidents could have caused the result to shape itself as it did. At present we are

concerned only with the first link in this great chain of occurrences, the march of the Russians into Germany. We have seen that the best judges had expected Napoleon to be victor in the Russian campaign, and that Stein himself had originally taken this view. Many of those who were more hopeful may probably have supposed that Russia would be finally successful, but after a long-continued and murderous contest such as had been witnessed in Spain. Very few, we may suppose, dreamed of such an overwhelming catastrophe as actually overtook the French army. But even such sanguine persons, if any such there were, might have hesitated to recommend Russia after she had escaped destruction herself to undertake the liberation of Germany. We shall see what opposition Alexander met with, when he announced his intention to do so, and such opposition was most natural and plausible. The losses in men and wealth which had been suffered by Russia in the campaign were appalling and terrific, only less so, if less so at all, than those of Napoleon himself. The armies had almost ceased to exist, and it might well be asked where the troops were that were to accomplish the liberation of Germany. Such was the condition of Russia when her enemy was humbled by what seemed a divine chastisement. It marks therefore a singular and heroic exaltation of hopefulness, that Stein should trace out beforehand the wonderful enterprise which was to be so successfully achieved at a time when the war had actually not begun in which few ventured to hope that Russia would escape destruction.

All these suggestions met with Alexander's approval, and the German Committee was immediately nominated. It consisted, according to Stein's own desire, of Count Kotschubei, Prince George of Oldenburg, and Stein, to whom soon after was added, by the request of the Committee itself, Count Lieven.

Of all his Russian friends Stein seems to place Kotschubei highest. Arndt has the following brief description of him.

I have often been invited to this house with Stein, and so became familiar with their way of life. Kotschubei was joined with Stein in his work, and Stein had soon become much attached to the man. In contemplating this family and its character, their plain simple unostentatious ways, one might be tempted to ask, Out of what planet have these people dropped into Muscovy's frozen snowland? Can such plants grow on the Neva?

Such plain trustworthy characters are commonly found in Stein's intimate regard. Such in Prussia had been Heinitz, Vincke. Kotschubei looked after the financial affairs of the Board.

Prince George of Oldenburg was married to Alexander's sister, the Grand Princess Catharine. He was the military member of the Committee. According to a description which seems to come from Stein, he had much merit but a degree of self-complacency that was at once ludicrous and tiresome, believed himself poet, statesman and general at once, and was in the habit of declaring himself absolutely free from prejudice. But he was only nominated provisionally until it should be convenient to place his father, the Duke of Oldenburg, who had been expelled from his dominions by Napoleon,

on the Committee, and accordingly we have no description of him from Arndt. But when the Committee assembled at St Petersburg in August Prince George did not come; Stein on his way to St Petersburg visited him at Twer and seems to have been much struck with the talents and accomplishments of the Grand Princess. Prince George died suddenly in December of this year, and his widow became later Queen of Würtemberg.

Count Lieven did not strike Arndt as a man of mark, but he says there was a man in the background named Countess Lieven. This Countess sprung from a Courland family, is to be met with in many English memoirs of the time of the Reform Bill, when her husband was Russian Ambassador in London.

The Committee held a meeting on June 16th, that is I suppose June 28th New Style, which it will be seen was the very day on which the Russians evacuated Wilna. It seems to have been at this meeting that it was resolved to ask for the addition of Count Lieven to their body, evidently on account of the knowledge of the actual condition of Germany which he must have acquired as Russian Ambassador at Berlin. Besides this, a plan of the objects to be aimed at and the manner of conducting business seems to have been drawn up. Upon this plan an Imperial Instruction was founded, which Pertz puts before us along with Stein's remarks upon it. His remarks betray that he felt apprehensive of being, as it were, absorbed in the Committee and of losing both his power of independent action and his influence over

the Emperor. The greatest possible simplicity, he writes, must reign in the conduct of business; the clumsy collegial method must be excluded and the bureaucratic method adopted, according to which each member is charged with the details of his own province, and only communicates with the Board concerning results or questions of great importance. He also observes that, each member of the Committee having hitherto enjoyed the honour of direct access to the Sovereign, they will be pained to see themselves deprived of that privilege. These remarks were not unnecessary. Immediately after the first meeting the members of the Board were separated by the evacuation of Wilna and the Emperor's journey to Moscow and St Petersburg, and the whole month of July would have been lost to business had the collegial method been adopted. As it was, Stein's activity was not for a moment suspended. His next report to the Emperor is dated from Swinciany, a station on the road between Wilna and Drissa, and other important Memoirs were written in Drissa itself.

In the first of these he examines more closely the measures necessary for raising an insurrection in Germany. He lays it down that no such spontaneous unreasoning insurrection as that which had been witnessed in Spain is to be looked for. South Germany, whose inhabitants are most susceptible of lively impressions and enthusiastic feelings, cannot hope for any military support since Austria's adhesion to France. In North Germany the people are exasperated by oppression, and in some districts a sullen fermentation constantly goes on, but it is

wanting in heat and promptness, and is besides repressed by the majority of well-to-do proprietors and officials, and by an attachment resting on habit to a legal and regular arrangement of things. We must therefore employ other means besides appeals and admonitions to rouse the people to activity. In Spain the people rose first, and not till they had maintained the fight for some time and won some successes did England step in with help. In Germany a foreign army must land first, and must call forth or at least encourage and shield the insurrection.

The best place for such a landing is the part of the coast between the Elbe and Yssel, which is more distant from the French than that between the Oder and Weichsel. A Swedish army must land at Lübeck, an English army at Emden. Here, when they have been joined by the population, they must make the territory between the Elbe and Oder the theatre of war, and withstand the troops which Napoleon may send against them. East Friesland, difficult of access on account of its moors, discontented on account of the loss of its old liberties, and closely connected with England, is to be defended as a kind of natural fortress. In this way the whole North of Germany between the Elbe, the Yssel, the Rhine and the Thuringian Forest, a part of Germany comprising the Prussian territories of Halberstadt, Magdeburg, Minden, Ravensberg, Mark, and the territory of Münster with the Hannoverian and Hessian provinces, inhabited by a strong and patriotic race, may receive a military organisation. In this region may be

raised, at the rate of 20,000 men to the million, an army of about 75,000 men not counting Landwehr and Landsturm.

But this scheme requires the speediest possible arrangement with Sweden and England.

Such was Stein's proposal. But now came strikingly to light the political difficulty involved in all such schemes, that difficulty which in the end converted the movement against Napoleon, to all appearance a movement beginning and ending in simple patriotism, into a political Revolution of the first magnitude. It is only a Government strong in the love and loyalty of its subjects that can venture in this way to put arms into the hands of the people. The arming of the people had been in that age the beginning of revolution, not only since the French disturbances, but since in 1782 the Irish Volunteers began the movement which ended in the catastrophe of 1798. Stein in fact—and he knew it well enough and rejoiced in it—was inviting all the princes within the limits he named to seat themselves in a kind of Siege Perilous from which only some Galahad of Princes could hope to rise again. The effect of his proposal was immediately seen. At Drissa Prince August, a brother of Prince George of Oldenburg, belonging to one of the Houses most nearly interested in the question, handed in a Memoir in which he protested against any appeal being made to the people, and particularly against any use being made of Secret Societies, and argued that everything should be done through the exiled Princes alone. Stein perhaps read this with a smile, and there are some passages in the

following answer which he can hardly have penned without a certain malicious enjoyment.

The first principle, which lays it down that we are to act exclusively through the expelled Princes—

(1) leads to a dispersion of the forces we want to bring to bear, (2) *entrusts them for the most part to perfectly incompetent persons*, (3) leaves maimed and paralysed a great mass of resources belonging to the territory occupied, as not belonging to those princes. We should begin an enterprise requiring the greatest union and vigour by confiding the execution of it to (*a*) a Hanoverian Government whose head lives in London, (*b*) a Hessian Government whose head is an incapable, little-minded, miserly old man, (*c*) a Fulda Government whose Prince would have his own opinion, (*d*) a Brunswick Government whose Prince is difficult to guide, (*e*) an Oldenburg Government, which (we must be civil here (*aside*)) assuredly deserves full confidence by its wisdom and morality, but would scarcely have coercive force enough to lead its colleagues *a, b, c, d*, and their Cabinets, Ministers, Generals, Chamberlains and Mistresses, for Frau v. Schlosheim will assuredly have a voice in the matter, forwards in the same path. The second inconvenience of the plan consists in this, that the territories which might become the theatre of war in Germany would be left in great part inactive. A landing on the Elbe with 40 or 50,000 men would cover and occupy the whole land between the Elbe, the Rhine, the Yssel and the North Sea; we could act mediately and immediately not only on the dominion of Princes *a, b, c, d*, but also on the Prussian dominions that have been annexed to the kingdom of Westphalia, on that part of Germany which has been united to France, and on the lands of many princes, faithful and contrite votaries of the Napoleonic religion, such as the Duke of Berg and the Princes of Lippe, &c. With what right would Princes *a, b, c, d* meddle with these territories, and if they did so with success would not they be seized with the desire of aggrandisement? The Cabinet of Cassel, for instance, has always had views on Corvey, Fulda and Paderborn; the Hanoverian Ministers have declared that the Balance of Power would be secured by the union of Osnabrück and Hildesheim with the Electorate; the Prince of Orange was scarcely set up at Fulda when he found himself so possessed with the desire of

blessing his neighbours with his wise and just government, that he became one of the most zealous defenders of the unjust subjugation of the Imperial Knighthood, which was in his neighbourhood, and whose maintenance had been decreed by the same Resolution of the Deputation of the Diet which assigned him his indemnity.

The next paragraph is important as containing the first announcement of the policy which was actually adopted in the next year under Stein's direction :

The impulse we propose to give Germany must proceed from a single energetic Power, resting on a broad grand basis, and not allowing its movement to be cramped by complicated or vicious motives. Russia and her Allies will send an army to land on the German coast ; they will invite the German population to free itself from the French yoke ; the leader of the armament will form a Central Committee for the territories over which his army operates, this Committee will naturally consist of the Princes and the men who have the greatest influence over the lands occupied by the French ; it will conduct the political and military business ; the territories occupied will not be *Jacobinised*, but their military force will be organised, and all will be done with unity, power, and with a single eye to the freedom and happiness of the German nation, to which the Princes are as much bound as the meanest of their subjects to render the offering of their own interest, since they have never been sovereigns, but members and subjects of the Emperor and Empire, and the sovereignty given them by the Confederation of the Rhine is a sheer usurpation.

There is a startling boldness and candour about this declaration. It announces, not obscurely, a political revolution within Germany as well as a liberation of it from the foreigner. But if it seem indiscreet, let us recollect that it was addressed to Alexander, who, though surrounded by German princes and almost a German prince himself, was

yet a pure Liberal in feeling. If we remember that he showed no inclination for the Bourbons, but played with the idea of raising Bernadotte to the French throne, that in London all his favour was for the Whig Opposition, and that the idea of princes existing for the happiness of their peoples was always on his lips, we can understand that the paragraph just quoted, which with his successor Nicholas would have been fatal to Stein's influence, if not dangerous to his person, was likely to move him to enthusiastic admiration.

Stein adds a paragraph in answer to what had been said about Secret Societies, which would be alone sufficient to show that he can never have encouraged the Tugendbund. After speaking with goodnatured contempt of Secret Societies in general, he declares that the present condition of those existing in Germany is entirely unknown to him, but adds, 'If there are any well-meaning people that have a taste for them, why not put up with their little weakness?' In conclusion he says, 'A society of Friends of Virtue which was formed in 1808, is respectable for its good intentions, but as yet we have seen nothing of its effects; they are in a furious rage with the French, but their anger reminds one of the anger of dreaming sheep.'

With this report Stein may be said to make his *début* in German as distinguished from Prussian politics. He takes up at once a position of characteristic boldness, and at once excites the dislike and distrust of a half-hearted party similar to the Kalkreuths and Zastrows of 1807. As in Prussian politics to the French party, so in German

politics he stands opposed to the party of Territorial Sovereignty, in other words, to the Middle States and to the crowd of officials and functionaries who were attached to them. The controversy divides itself into two questions: (1) Shall we put into the hands of the people arms which they may use against their own princes as well as against Napoleon? (2) When Napoleon is expelled, in what form will Germany be reconstituted? and will there be found room in it for the Territorial Sovereignty? It was the House of Oldenburg, we see, with which he began this controversy, but he carried it on afterwards with more important politicians. The great representative of this party, the Metternich of the smaller States, was the Hanoverian Minister Count Münster, with whom about this time Stein was beginning to form important relations. The English alliance was in Stein's view a matter of preeminent importance to Russia, and he did not believe it possible to excite any useful rebellion in Germany without English help. Count Münster was now in London and offered himself as the most serviceable link of connexion between England and the Continent. Now that the reader has had a specimen of the style Stein assumes towards the Prince of Oldenburg, he will easily understand the reflexions of Arndt upon the correspondence between Stein and Münster, which passed through his hands.

Stein embraced at once with the warmest cordiality any one who hated and abhorred with all his soul the French and Napoleon and their dominion. And so for a time Münster was a political favourite of his, and in this tone were the letters to him

uncovered. But I did not escape the reading the letters of both, and in a position to read somewhat more coolly between the lines. Now interest was the very basis of character in the two men. In Stein I could see the proud and frank Imperial Knight, with a halo about him of memories of the Hohenstaufen Emperors, and wanting to have the whole German nation great and free—in Count Münster I was under all the courtly aristocratic Junker Count of the eighteenth century that encountered me. Even then in his letters he often urged objections to Stein's view, that there was no other way for it but that the war must be waged as an insurrection against the foreigners—so as to make their hair stand on end—in Spanish and Tirolese fashion, that all the nation must be called to arms with all the forces of their hearts and hands. Indeed he almost as good as said that it would be better in the end to bear the Napoleonic yoke some ten or twenty years longer, and to wait for an opportunity, than to let the common people feel their strength too much—even then he used to allude to dangerous demagogues. These views of Münster were branded by Stein to myself as paltry and Junkerish in the words: 'The truth is he is a Westphalian, and these tiresome Plattdeutsch people ponder everything so, and insist on seeing the cock with his spurs complete in the new-laid egg; and besides he has breathed too much court air of Hanoverian Junkerdom; but still he is a fine trustworthy fellow.'

But for the present we must quit that part of Stein's plans which concerns the rising in Germany, as being too closely connected with the foreign policy of Russia to be made intelligible without a preliminary discussion of that, and must look a little at his other scheme, by which he hoped to draw off into the Russian service some of the German troops that marched under Napoleon's standard.

The plan in itself was so obvious, that it could not but occur to any one who looked at the campaign now opening from a German point of view. Two years before Stein, another refugee from

Germany had sought shelter from Alexander; his relation Peter, Duke of Oldenburg, the annexation of whose little state by Napoleon in 1810 had done more perhaps than anything else to bring on the war between France and Russia. Although at that time there was nominally peace in Germany, yet the Duke had even then suggested to the Czar that he might take advantage of the bitter discontent fermenting in many of the military services of Germany, particularly the Prussian, to attract distinguished officers to his own. For this purpose the former commander of the Oldenburg army, a certain Colonel Arentschild, was sent for, and arrived at St Petersburg in December 1811. He had much military experience and had fought in India against Tippoo, but he seemed to Arndt, who also heard the same complaint made by military men, to have lost his energy. Arentschild was now sent into Prussia with a commission from the Czar to engage officers 'who might be out of employment and might have no further engagements with other sovereigns.' For the moment he had no great success, for the hope was still entertained among the Prussian officers that their king would stand by Russia in the impending conflict. But when this hope was disappointed and it became certain that Prussia's contingent would march with Napoleon, the offers he had made were remembered, and a kind of emigration of Prussian officers to Russia took place.

It has long been repeated by German writers that when the Treaty of March 1812 was signed by Frederick William no less than 300 Prussian officers laid down their commissions and took service with

the Czar. Lately it has been made out by an elaborate criticism¹ that this statement is monstrously exaggerated and rests on no contemporary authority. But when it has been granted that of the officers who retired some did so before the date of the Treaty, others several months after it, that some of them went to Spain and not to Russia, and that the whole number of those who retired was not three hundred but little more than one hundred; when all these amendments are made, it remains true that a considerable number of distinguished Prussian officers, among them the famous military writer Clausewitz, were in Russia at this time. In these circumstances the plan of a German Legion attached to the Russian service could not but suggest itself, particularly as there was already a German Legion consisting of Hanoverians and Brunswickers attached to the Russian service, and we find that actually before the war of 1812, Lützow had been commissioned to recruit a corps out of German deserters. For Stein's part it can only be claimed that he gave the plan a more definite system to an enterprise which was already in the air, and at the same time that he secured it being exclusively under the control of the Duke of Oldenburg.

Now we have heard only of the two Princes, Prince de Ligne, who it appears represented their views at the Committee until it was able to commence its regular sittings at St Petersburg. Even between them and Stein there was no great agreement of opinions. But when those regular sittings commenced and the Duke of Oldenburg presided

¹ Lehmann, *Kriegs- und Friedenspolitik*.

over the Committee, Stein seems to have been instantly overtaken with a feeling of despair. The Duke apparently was stiff, formal and prejudiced; there was a hereditary antipathy between the Imperial Knight and the Sovereign Prince; at any rate it is clear that he had the art of driving Stein out of all patience. Intercourse with him called up what was perhaps the most tiresome experience of Stein's whole life; it reminded him of those days in Wetzlar more than 30 years back, when in compliance with his parents' wish he had tried how he could fancy the career of an imperial lawyer. 'He stands there,' he exclaimed, 'for all the world like a lawsuit of the Old German Empire, and lectures me two or three hours *stans pede in uno*.' And again to Arndt when he was about to pay his respects to the Duke, 'Make up your mind to an examination in German history, both of the Empire and the States, and to stand for two or three hours on your legs. Why! he knows all the names and figures and pedigrees by heart, and on those long stiff Westphalian legs he could stand to death the stoutest man in spite of the whole Diet of Regensburg.'

Stein was the last man who was likely to put up with this infliction. He proceeded at once to a sort of *coup d'état*. The following letter to the Czar is dated August 18th, that is the ninth day after his arrival in St Petersburg, and therefore a still shorter time after he made the acquaintance of the Duke.

Your Imperial Majesty has given His Highness the Duke of Oldenburg a place in the German Committee. Notwithstanding the respect I feel for the virtues and moral qualities of that Prince, I am still compelled by my devotion to your Imperial

Majesty's person and for the cause which you maintain, *and by my natural candour*, to lay before you the following remarks.

His Highness the Duke of Oldenburg's view of the internal affairs of Germany is so entirely different from mine, that I see no means of reconciling them without surrendering my own in the most important points, which my attachment to that which presents itself to my mind as truth will never allow me to do. The Duke disapproves

(1) The Appeal to the Germans : I hold and held it necessary, since a Government must express its will ; all men who know the interior of Germany have been of my opinion.

(2) The Duke does not believe in the possibility of setting in motion to any purpose the population between Elbe and Yssel under the protection of a disembarking army : I am convinced of it ; and if we are to expect everything purely from the advance of the Russian army, and to treat the Germans as an inert mass, there would be no use in occupying ourselves with the means of influencing them.

Opinions which differ so materially from each other are not to be reconciled ; I detest the system of compromises, mutual sacrifice of opinions, complaisance ; it is the most ruinous system of all. I entreat your Majesty most earnestly to relieve me for the future from participation in the business which concerns the guidance of public opinion in the interior of Germany, and to grant me permission, in case the Crown Prince of Sweden undertakes a descent near Memel, to go to him and try on the spot itself to carry out your Majesty's wishes, and prove my reverential devotion to you.

It appears that the *coup d'état* succeeded. Alexander, with his liberal notions, sided with Stein ; accordingly he gave him permission to conduct German affairs with Counts Kotschubei and Lieven without the Duke ; by which arrangement I gather that the Duke's share of the whole business of the Committee was restricted henceforth to the affairs of the German Legion. He retained a kind of general superintendence of these. We may here briefly sum up the history of this enterprise, which ended, if we

compare the results attained with what had been expected, in failure.

The first step, as Stein had pointed out, was to promulgate an address written 'with gravity and simplicity', which should invite all well-disposed people to range themselves under the Russian standard. The following is the Address as it was published in the name of the Russian General, from Stein's draught corrected by Alexander.

APPEAL TO THE GERMANS TO RANGE THEMSELVES UNDER THE
BANNER OF THE FATHERLAND AND OF HONOUR.

Germans !

Why do you make war with Russia, advancing across its frontiers and treating as enemies its races which have stood for many generations past in friendly relation with you, and have received into their bosom thousands of your countrymen, offering rewards to their talents and employment to their industry? What has misled you to make this unjust attack? It can only be fatal to yourselves, and will end in the death of hundreds of thousands or with your complete subjugation.

But this attack is not the result of a free or independent resolution on your part: your sound sense, your regard for justice, assure me of this; you are the unhappy tools of the foreign ambition, which incessantly labours to complete the subjugation of unhappy Europe.

Germans !

Unhappy dishonoured instruments for the attainment of ambitious ends, be men and rouse yourselves! Consider that you have had in history for centuries the position of a great nation, distinguished in the arts of war and peace. Learn from the example of the Spaniards and Portuguese, that the firm and energetic will of a nation has the power to frustrate the attack and the oppression of foreigners. You are oppressed but not yet humiliated or corrupted; if many in your upper classes have forgotten their duties to their Fatherland, yet the great majority of your nation is honest, valiant, weary of the foreign yoke, and true to God and to the Fatherland.

You, then, whom the conqueror has driven to the frontiers of Russia, abandon the standards of slavery, assemble yourselves under those of the Fatherland, of Liberty, of national honour, that have been raised under the protection of my gracious Master, His Majesty the Emperor. He promises you the aid of all brave Russian men from a population of 50,000,000 of his subjects, who are determined to maintain to the last breath the fight for independence and for national honour.

The Emperor Alexander has been pleased to commission me to offer all brave German officers and soldiers that will change their service appointment in the German Legion.

It will be commanded by one of the Princes of Germany, who has proved by deeds and sacrifices his attachment to the cause of the Fatherland, and the reconquest of the freedom of Germany is its first destination.

Should the great end be gained, the grateful Fatherland will bestow splendid rewards on her true and heroic sons that will have saved her from destruction.

Should the result be not entirely fortunate, my Gracious Emperor guarantees to these brave men abodes and an asylum in the fine climate of Southern Russia.

Germans, make your choice !

Obey the call of the Fatherland and of Honour, and enjoy the reward of your courage and your sacrifices, or continue to bow your necks under the yoke of oppression that weighs upon you, and you will perish in shame, misery and ignominy, the scorn of foreigners and the curse of your posterity.

By order of His Imperial Majesty the Emperor of Russia,

The Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army,

BARCLAY DE TOLLY.

Such is Stein's rhetoric on the rare occasions when he condescends to employ rhetoric. It aims at 'gravity and simplicity;' it avoids carefully all thoughts that do not belong to the common heart of mankind, all words that are not ancient and usual, and all turns of expression that are in the least degree hyperbolical. His original draught differed

in some points from the above, which is the Address in the form in which it was published.

In the second paragraph, where Alexander writes simply, 'the foreign ambition which incessantly labours to complete the slavery of unhappy Europe,' Stein had written, 'a conqueror who brought slavery and ruin upon his own nation, which had confidingly entrusted to him the sovereign power, and labours to extend both over the rest of unhappy Europe.' It appears that Alexander could not bring himself to accuse Napoleon of governing despotically or of making conquests, since both charges might be retorted on himself.

In the third paragraph Alexander softened considerably Stein's attack upon the German Governments and ruling classes. He curtailed, 'though many of your Princes betrayed the cause of the Fatherland instead of bleeding and falling for it, though many of your nobles and officials suffered themselves to be used as instruments in its destruction instead of following their honourable vocation of becoming its defenders;' to 'if many in your upper classes have forgotten their duties to their Fatherland.'

The other alterations made by the Emperor are unimportant. By circulating this Address and by other modes of persuasion it was now attempted to work on the minds of the German part of Napoleon's army. In particular it was expected that the Prussians who to the number of 20,000 were attached to Macdonald's *corps d'armée*, which was stationed in the Baltic Provinces, would prove easy to work upon. Their commander was General Grawert, a blind worshipper of Napoleon, but the second in command

was Lieutenant General v. Yorck, whose name was destined to acquire European celebrity before the year was out. What his views were was not exactly known, but no one could suspect him of French sympathies. Major v. d. Golz, who had been a Prussian officer and active in the Tugendbund, went to Riga to try what he could do. But he had little success. Yorck in fact had as little sympathy with men of the stamp of Stein as with the French party. He had turned the Prussian idea of military obedience to the King into a rigid doctrine, and regarded with the most unqualified disapproval those who in the last extremity of Prussia ventured to think for themselves. When for example Tiedemann, one of the most distinguished of Prussian officers and much esteemed both by Scharnhorst and Stein, who had gone to Russia in the military emigration and had been sent by Alexander to Riga to advise the Governor, perished in the engagement near Dahlenkirchen, Yorck commented on his death in the following language: 'This man has fallen in this engagement a victim to his passions and his political opinions.' Then after giving an account of the manner of his death which appears not to be true, he proceeds: 'It is a good thing that he is dead; now we shall have more peace. In the last days of his life he made himself besides contemptible, not only by often inciting our troops—vainly, by good fortune—to desertion, but by making the shameful proposal on the 6th to Major Crammon at Schlock that he should capitulate with his battalion.' When such was the view taken of Stein's plan by the representative Prussian soldier of the time, it could not be

expected that Golz would meet with much success, and he did not. In the end the German Committee began to consider it the most hopeful plan to apply their seductions to prisoners.

Here they were not entirely unsuccessful, and the German Legion did actually come into existence. It had the benefit of a talent for organisation which was exhibited by another member of the military emigration. This was Major Ferdinand v. Stülpnagel, from the Uckermark, who in 1809 had stood in confidential relations with Blücher. Arndt thought him very energetic and able, and he seems to have done more for the Legion than any other man. To Stein he brought a special recommendation from Count Arnim v. Boitzenburg. Nevertheless he complained to Arndt that he could not induce Stein to treat him with common civility. Fits of irritability, we know, all Stein's friends had to put up with at times; but Stülpnagel seemed somehow to have incurred his rooted dislike. The explanation of this dropped from Stein's lips in conversation with Arndt: 'Do not talk to me about your Stülpnagel, a frightened trembler and maker of obeisances!' There was something wrong, it appeared, in the poor man's manner. Upon this hint Arndt acted; he advised Stülpnagel to pluck up a little courage, and the next time Stein should be rude to stand up to him and give him as good as he brought. This advice he took, and with the most happy result. The very next day, on seeing Arndt, Stein began, 'You were not so far wrong after all—I had formed a mistaken notion of Stülpnagel. There is no great harm in him, I only wish he would not try to be so polite,

but be more like a soldier and *pitch into people*. Stein indeed had had enough of courtiers, and whenever men approached him with polite simper and grin fancied, no doubt, that he saw Count Haugwitz before him and a Battle of Jena in the background. In the autobiography full justice is done to Stülpnagel, and what success the German Legion had is attributed to his 'perseverance, patience and intelligence.'

But the formation of it met with many unexpected hindrances, of which we may distinguish three principal ones.

1. It was not easy to induce the Russians to take the same view of their German prisoners that was taken of them by Alexander. The plan required that the German prisoners should be distinguished from those belonging to other nations, and that they should be forwarded to certain centres—Revel and Kief were the centres chosen. Strict orders were given by the Czar that this should be done. But the agents of the German Committee who remained at head-quarters, Prince August of Oldenburg, Count Chasot and v. Bose, soon discovered that after the Czar's departure from the camp his orders were neglected. Russian chauvinism was not disposed to treat the Germans at all in the spirit of the Appeal, or to allow that the formation of a German Legion could be an important object. Hence a large proportion of the German prisoners made were not sent on to the centres at all.

2. To induce the prisoners to enlist it was evidently necessary to obtain their confidence. This was not done. Finding themselves treated contemp-

tuously or cruelly by their Russian captors, the prisoners—even those who actually came under the influence of the recruiting officers of the Legion—were seldom disposed to close with the offers made to them. The promise that they should be employed for the liberation of Germany and afterwards be either restored to their homes or settled in separate German colonies on Russian ground, made no impression on them. They regarded it with suspicion and believed that it was intended simply to entrap them into the Russian service. Accordingly the number who were prevailed on to enlist was, compared to the whole number of prisoners, contemptibly small.

3. The other unexpected difficulty is thus stated by Arndt: 'We dreamed of a speedy increase of the Legion to some ten or twenty thousand, but, but—God looked upon it, or rather had already looked upon it. The prisoners had grown dry, dead and nerveless in marrow and bone—what with marches, cold, want, and harsh cruel treatment from their Russian drivers as they were dragged along roads of snow and ice—and so they died off like flies. I saw samples enough of these unhappy starved and frozen youths. The end was that little vigorous or healthy material was left for the Legion.' In short, the fearful mortality which in those days attended the Russian armies themselves from the combined effect of an extreme climate and a half-barbarous military administration, visited the recruits of the German Legion also. Of 566 men who set out from Polocz for Pskov there arrived only 166, and out of 4200 who set out from Kief for the same place it is said

that only 381 arrived. One of the most eminent officers of the Legion, Count Chasot, died at Pskov in January 1813 of hospital fever.

This mortality did however subside in May 1813, and the Legion rose at last to a number little short of 10,000 men. But in consequence of the course which events took it could not be used in the way which Stein had contemplated at the beginning. He had imagined that Germany would be liberated as Spain and Portugal had been, by an insurrection supported by an invading force from England which he hoped would be assisted by Sweden. To procure this Anglo-Swedish force was at this time the principal object of his foreign policy, and he intended the German Legion to co-operate with it. It was to form a link between the insurgent population of Germany and the foreign force. It was to furnish the *cadres* which would be filled up by the German insurrection. But he was disappointed of this foreign force in 1812, and early in 1813 Prussia took the place in the German movement which he had intended for England. The Prussian army now furnished the *cadres*, and for this purpose the German Legion was no longer required. In these circumstances it could do no more than furnish an auxiliary force to the allied armies. As such it played an honourable part in the War of Liberation, and was ultimately absorbed into the Prussian army.

In like manner the attempts made by Stein and the German Committee in 1812 to foment disaffection in Germany through journalism and other means of agitation may be said not so much to have failed as to have been rendered superfluous

by the turn which events took. Had 1813 seen the Russian war still undecided and Napoleon's position not materially altered from what it was in 1812, this agitation might have borne important fruit. But the Russian catastrophe changed the face of things so much and put Germany into so completely different a relation to Napoleon, that the previous agitation lost at once its suitableness and seasonableness at the same time that all its objects were fully attained. An insurrection fully as great as Stein had ever dreamed of broke out in 1813, but not in consequence of the agitation made by his coadjutors and agents in 1812. Nevertheless this agitation has an importance of its own, for it made manifest for the first time that the popular movement against Napoleon could not be limited to Napoleon nor cease with his fall, but must necessarily pass into a movement of political reform within Germany itself.

We showed how the slight and simple machinery employed by Stein's party in 1808, when the idea of a German insurrection was first conceived, had no connexion with the Tugendbund properly so called. The effort now made with the same object led to some increase of this machinery. The association now became such as might almost deserve to be called a Secret Society, and it was therefore even more natural than before to confound it with the Tugendbund. That harmless little association was credited with all that was now done, and with the bold political opinions that were now promulgated in order to rouse a martial ardour among the people. Such an agitation inevitably led to the chapter of German

political history which opened in the years that followed Napoleon's downfall, when the Governments were seized with a suspicion that a wide-spread revolutionary conspiracy was sapping society and that the leaders in the War of Liberation were at the bottom of it. How unavoidable it was that this suspicion should arise, we see at once when we find the leaders of the agitation of 1812 laying it down, that 'the Princes who have stooped to make themselves Napoleon's prefects have forfeited their claim to the obedience of their subjects, and that these are absolved from their allegiance.' At the same time we may see not less clearly that this agitation is as completely independent as ever of the Tugendbund. The Tugendbund had indeed by this time ceased to exist, but our agitators are so little informed about it that they have not even heard of its dissolution. The following extract from a letter of this date, written by Stein to Gruner, puts in a clear light at once the good reason the German Governments had to be alarmed at this agitation and its utter disconnection from the Tugendbund :

Considering that youth is most susceptible of enthusiasm and noble feelings, we must try to circulate among the youth and at the Universities, writings calculated to elevate the soul, so that at the moment of the landing of an army we may find among them enthusiastic adherents ready to devote themselves to the cause of the Fatherland and fitted for useful service. Is the Association of the Friends of Virtue still in existence? who are its chiefs? Could not we set them in motion now, using the greatest circumspection against treason and blabbing of secrets?

Justus Gruner at Prag was set over the agitation in Germany, and was in constant communi-

cation with the German Committee at St Petersburg. He organised a company of inspectors or spies, forty in number, whose duty it was to collect information each in the district of Germany assigned to him. These spies were instructed (1) to collect information about the French army, its strength, the position of the different corps, the temper prevailing in it, the reinforcements it received, &c. &c.; (2) to collect information about the temper prevailing in Germany, and to work upon it by winning new adherents from all classes, by diffusing information about the misery caused by the French dominion, by conveying assurances of the readiness of Russia and England to furnish help, by combating false views, and by directly assisting well-devised attempts at insurrection; (3) by establishing small guerilla companies, in order to capture couriers, intercept communications, &c.; (4) to assist in the formation of a German Legion in Russia, by advertising Russia's willingness to receive all German soldiers, whether officers or privates, who desire to fight for the good cause, and by informing them of the best way to go to Russia.

Something seems to have been done towards creating the guerilla companies that were to operate in the Spessart, the Thuringian Forest, and the Tucher Heath. Arndt, as we have seen, was helped forward on his way to St Petersburg, and there wrote and printed his "*Catechism for the German soldier and Militiaman* (Wehrmann), in which it is shown how a Christian militiaman ought to behave and go into battle with God's blessing." From St Petersburg it was sent to the army, and in

the following years was circulated in large numbers in Germany. At the same time, the Second Part of his *Spirit of the Age* was printed secretly at Leipzig. Distinguished officers, particularly the Austrian Pfuel and the Prussian Boyen, were assisted to make their way to Russia. Such then was this agitation, which, assisted particularly in Prussia by the abiding oppression of the French, excited the people to such a point that Metternich warned the French ambassador at Vienna of the possibility of an outbreak which might give Russia a reinforcement of hundreds of thousands.

But on September 22 Gruner was arrested in Prag by the Austrian Government, at the instance, it is said, of the French party of Prussia, and conveyed to Munkacz. By this occurrence the agitation lost its soul, and the plans commenced fell almost into abeyance.

But about this very time, in the months of September and October, the result of the Russian campaign was decided, and the relation of Napoleon to Germany was profoundly modified by the first calamity on a great scale which befel him. We are now to consider this change of fortune.

CHAPTER VII.

STEIN AND THE RUSSIAN CAMPAIGN.

THUS far we have seen what Stein was able to do in that province of German affairs which he had chosen for himself, and we have seen that at least for its immediate purpose it did not amount to much. But German affairs could not be so clearly separated from the rest of Russian foreign policy as to allow Stein to withhold his advice on the great questions which arose during the course of the war. He became in the end one of the Czar's advisers on foreign affairs, and continued such till the fall of Napoleon.

But his influence upon Russian policy in general does not begin soon enough to have any effect upon the campaign up to the evacuation of Moscow. The way in which Napoleon's attack should be received by Russia was decided before he arrived. He had nothing to do with that resolution to retreat before the French until the army reached the Torres Vedras of Drissa, which, for good or evil, had the effect of throwing Prussia in pure despair into the

arms of Napoleon. He had nothing to do with the negotiations which procured for Russia peace with Turkey and the alliance of Sweden. Nor had he any influence on the strategy of the campaign. The controversy which went on at Drissa, the retreat of the armies, and their junction at Smolensk, the defeat they suffered there and their further retreat to Moscow, the evacuation and burning of Moscow—all this Stein witnessed as an impartial spectator. What his reflexions were during this time may be seen from the following, written to Count Münster on September 25th :

It is absolutely necessary that England should undertake the conduct of German affairs and take the German Legion into its pay. From the personalities of the persons that here rule and direct we can expect no wise, great, or unselfish plans in prosperity, nor any unshaken firmness or magnanimity in adversity. The persons who enjoy the Emperor's confidence, and are nearest his person, are the Chancellor, Count Araktcheieff, and the Minister of Police, Baloczeff; the first is well known, the second extremely narrow-minded, the third crafty, short-sighted, ill-informed in the great affairs of the world, and all three are disposed to peace. Among the Emperor's counsellors there is not to be found a man of vigour and wisdom. If affairs go tolerably well firmness will be shown; if ill, in spite of all fine talking there will be just the same submission as in 1805 and 1807. The explanation of this behaviour lies in the want of depth of understanding and heart, in superficiality (Stein is, I think, evidently speaking of the Emperor). We may reasonably confide in the gallantry of the army and the spirit of the nation; strength is here, but no guidance. The evacuation of Moscow is unpardonable, against the will of Bennigsen and Doctoroff, against the loudly expressed will of the army—no doubt it is only the city that is lost, but a great and populous city. The moral effect of it both at home and abroad, especially on the abject Cabinets of Berlin and Vienna, is ruinous.

His view is in one word this, that Russia, so far

as its people are concerned, resembles Spain, but in respect of its Government is ominously like Prussia, as he remembered Prussia in 1806. The Czar was not unlike Frederick William, or if he differed from him did not differ clearly for the better. His talents were livelier but less solid; he was less irresolute but more vain and fickle. In the Minister who stood beside him Stein saw again the type he was so familiar with, the type of Haugwitz.

This Minister was that Romanzoff whom Stein had encountered at Mainz more than thirty years before, when he made his first essay in diplomacy in the days of the Great Frederick. Romanzoff was now Chancellor, that is Minister of Foreign Affairs, and was regarded as the great representative of the policy of Tilsit. In that capacity it was his study to represent the war with France as hardly serious, and as likely to end in a speedy peace and a renewal of the alliance. In Stein's sketch of him we recognize the type of the courtier-statesman, servile at heart, confused in understanding, at once mystical and sentimental in speech, who belongs peculiarly to Napoleon's age, and was the favourite butt of that cynical conqueror. 'He had been dazzled,' writes Stein, 'by Napoleon's greatness, by the attention and distinction with which he had been treated during his residence at Paris in 1809; he was inexhaustible in relating anecdotes of his Majesty the Emperor, her Imperial Highness Madame Mère, &c. &c.' And again, 'All Romanzoff's views have a dreamy cloudy tendency and character; half-truths, apprehended by an imperfect organ of vision; he always tries to make you

guess and suspect more than he expresses, and he leaves his hearers unsatisfied, uncertain and uncomfortable.' His feeling for Napoleon was not reciprocated; for the Emperor had been heard to say that Alexander fascinated all the diplomatic agents that were sent to his court but did not show equal skill in the choice of his own Ministers, and that his Chancellor was a fool (*que son Chancelier était un sot*).

To do Alexander justice it does not appear that he was deceived in the character of his Chancellor; his advice was not regarded, and if he was retained in office, perhaps this was because openly to dismiss the representative of the policy of Tilsit would have been to close the door of reconciliation irrevocably. But though it might be necessary for a time, such facing both ways was most dangerous, as Prussia had experienced, in dealing with Napoleon. So long as it lasted, for example, it deprived Russia of the help of England; for how could the English, who had but little confidence in Alexander himself, negotiate seriously with him while Romanzoff was his Chancellor? 'He had an aversion to England,' writes Stein, 'as the wicked world asserted, on account of a corporal chastisement received from the English Ambassador Mitchell, whom he had thwarted in a love affair; he had borne hard on English commerce when he had the department of trade, and adopted a system adverse to English interests; accordingly the English hated him thoroughly.'

This being so, it is evident that a clear-headed counsellor who knew Napoleon's character and how dangerous it was,

*τῷ ὀαριζέμεναι ἄτε παρθένος ἡίθεός τε
παρθένος ἡίθεός τ' ὀαρίζετον ἀλλήλοιιν*

(Romanzoff had declared that Napoleon would be recalled from Dresden to Paris by 'the teething of the King of Rome') would advise Alexander before all things to dismiss this Minister.

Accordingly we find him writing thus of Romanzoff in a letter to Count Münster dated September 10th: 'Even if fortune should grant the Russians a great success, this weak fantastic head, this narrow soul will not be capable of restoring political order on firm or judicious foundations; and even if the force of circumstances should compel him to retire in the end, yet the immediate danger is too great to allow of the loss of time; all means must be taken of driving him into retirement.' He recommends that the English Ambassador should be commissioned to make the necessary communications, sparing at the same time the Czar's personal feelings, and that the Crown Prince of Sweden should be pressed to speak with the openness which might be pardoned in a soldier. He adds that public opinion points to Markoff, Kotschubei and Panin as possible successors—there is little doubt, I think, that his own choice would have fallen on Kotschubei, and perhaps he means to designate Kotschubei when he remarks that the person chosen must be 'a man of strong, noble and conciliatory character, incapable of a selfish or crafty policy.'

Besides the dismissal of Romanzoff Stein counsels the closest alliance with England. The European war had since Tilsit and more especially since 1809

taken the character of a duel between Napoleon and England. Russia had taken part in it as an ally of Napoleon's. Now that she found herself engaged with her former ally in a struggle for life and death, it was evident that she ought to lose no time in securing the help of his great enemy. To be in deadly war with Napoleon and not in alliance with England was a monstrous situation for Russia. Yet Stein knew only too well how far from imaginary was the danger of such a situation continuing some time. He had seen Prussia in the time of Haugwitz almost priding herself upon holding a position in which she was about equally hostile to Napoleon and to the enemies of Napoleon. Moreover experience told as yet only of one combination by which Napoleon could be successfully encountered; it was the combination exhibited in Spain of a patriotic nation with the wealth and leadership of England.

Such then in the earlier part of the war was the policy which Stein recommended to the Emperor. He advised him to dismiss Romanzoff and to form a close alliance with England.

But the crisis now arrives. Up to September 14th the campaign had taken the course which Napoleon had led people to expect as almost a matter of course. He had, as usual, secured the offensive; in the opposite camp confusion and indecision had been betrayed; he had overcome the first difficulties and passed the critical position of Smolensk; in spite of all that was said of a Fabian strategy, the Russians had risked a great battle at Borodino and been defeated; he had marched upon

the capital; Kutusoff had evacuated it; and on September 14th he entered Moscow. All this might seem a repetition of what had happened in Austria both in 1805 and 1809, in Prussia in 1806, in Spain in 1808. These precedents pointed to a speedy submission of Russia, for both Austria and Prussia had yielded. It had however been otherwise in Spain; there the resistance of the nation had not been quelled by the fall of Madrid, but on the contrary had grown steadily more determined and successful. Now far more even than in the time of Stein's Ministry the example of Spain kept hope alive.

There was, however, a difference between the cases of Spain and Russia. It was not till her King had been expelled and a Napoleonic King imposed in his place that Spain had risen; and it is scarcely possible that had Ferdinand remained among them the Spaniards could have wrought the miracles which they wrought to avenge him. Now whatever confidence Stein might feel in the Russian people, he could not but remember that the decision did not lie with them, but that it lay with the fickle Czar, counselled by Romanzoff. This Czar had deserted Austria after Austerlitz, and Prussia after Friedland. It was true that at Tilsit he had but followed public opinion, and that the public opinion of Russia had proclaimed itself this time in favour of resistance. But an absolute sovereign is acted on by two influences, of which both alike claim to be called public opinion. Beside the voice of the multitude, which seldom reaches him and when it does is an inarticulate clamour, he hears also the

voice of his Court, at once more distinct and nearer to his ear. It was not Romanzoff alone who counselled submission; Bennigsen also and the haughty Empress Mother despaired, and the Grand Prince Constantine clamoured loudly for peace.

Alexander received on September 19th the news of Kutusoff's determination to evacuate Moscow. On the 20th he issued a Proclamation, in which he said:

Let no one despair. Is it indeed possible to lose courage at a time when all classes of the realm give proof of courage and constancy? When the enemy sees himself with the remains of his troops at a distance from his own country in the midst of a numerous nation, surrounded with our armies, one of which faces him and the other three threaten to cut off his communications and do not permit him to bring up reinforcements? When Spain has not only thrown off his yoke, but even threatens to invade the French territory? When a great part of plundered and exhausted Europe only serves him under compulsion, and impatiently counts the minutes until it can make itself free?

On the next day came Colonel Michaud, with the news that Moscow was not only entered by the French, but in flames. The intelligence of the conflagration, which at first seemed by no means a compensation but a new and overwhelming blow, was received by the Czar in a similar spirit. It was then he said, 'Napoleon or I, either he or I, we cannot any longer reign together; I have learnt to know him; he will not deceive me any longer.' Such utterances coming from a vainglorious prince might perhaps not prove any invincible resolution; but this time Alexander kept his word. When early in October Napoleon sent Lauriston to Kutusoff

with overtures of peace, and Kutusoff reported them to his master, Alexander answered as follows :

When you set out to the army which was entrusted to you, you heard from myself that it was my wish to avoid all negotiations with the enemy and all peaceful relations with him. After what has happened I must to-day emphatically repeat that the resolution I have formed in its full extent must be firmly maintained by you. All the directions sent from me to you, all my orders addressed to you, in one word everything, must convince you of my firm determination that at the present time no proposal on the part of the enemy should interrupt the contest or weaken the sacred obligation to avenge our insulted country.

Nothing could be of more momentous importance, nor at the same time more unexpected than this iron firmness of the Czar. Here then for the first time Napoleon encountered at once a strong people and a strong Government, for Spain had been without a Government, and the Austrian Government in 1809 had failed in resolution. But how surprising that of all the European Sovereigns Alexander should be the first to rise to the level of the time! His conduct hitherto had been such as to procure him throughout Europe a reputation for fickleness and want of purpose. English politicians at this time regarded him as in 1806 they had regarded Frederick William, that is, as thoroughly untrustworthy, and Napoleon himself, the great judge of character, seems throughout his Russian enterprise to have counted upon Alexander's weakness as one of the best-ascertained factors of the problem before him.

Have we not already witnessed a similar change of character in Frederick William? Did not he who for years had been pointed at as a coward by foreign statesmen show real courage and resolution in 1808?

Those sweeping reforms in the state and in the army were carried out with a trenchant rapidity quite unknown to the earlier part of his reign. It will naturally occur to us that the condition of the two princes, when this change of character took place, was similar in one important point, viz. that Stein was at their side.

It is very natural that German writers should lay a great stress upon this coincidence, and should claim for Stein the largest share in the influence which fixed Alexander's will. It is also natural that the Russians should reduce his share as much as possible. And so Bogdanowich writes, 'It is commonly said that the celebrated Stein mainly contributed to bring about the continuance of the war; but considering the universal hatred of the foreign invaders that then prevailed throughout Russia, this seems little to be credited.' The following middle view is given by Bernhardi, the best-informed German who has written on Russian history :

In order to explain this phenomenon it has often been pointed out that at this time the famous German statesman, the Baron vom Stein, stood at his side and sustained his courage. Whoever has himself been in an extremity knows how important and valuable it is in such circumstances to be able to share the oppressive anxiety with a man of invincible firmness, and to lean on him, and so it is no doubt possible that Stein may have exerted a certain influence. But no explanation of the kind is nearly sufficient, for Stein was a foreigner, and after all one may have sense and insight, but not so easily character and firmness for another. The explanation of the phenomenon lay far deeper. After Austerlitz and Friedland the prevalent feeling of Russia required the Emperor to abandon a contest in which the Russians had taken part against their will, but this time the public opinion of the

country would have been exasperated if he had been inclined to waver or give way. Alexander knew this, and he knew too that the European position of Russia was at stake as it had never been before: he fully understood and felt his position; he felt himself under the power of a constraining fatality, the *ἀνάγκη* of the Greeks. But even such a consciousness does not immediately give to a naturally soft and mobile character the firmness it needs to play the heroic part assigned to it, and it cost Alexander a mighty internal struggle to attain to such firmness. It was such a struggle as made an epoch in his life, and left a deep and lasting mark on his nature; it made him another man than he had been before.

Shaken by the force of events and the loss of the old capital of the Czars, Alexander turned for comfort, advice and sustaining confidence to the companion of his boyhood and youth, Prince Alexander Nicolatiewitch Galitzin. This friend had long inclined to mysticism, and is supposed to have secretly belonged to the Moravian brotherhood; he directed the Emperor in impassioned language to the Bible, as the source of all salvation, all strength and inward peace. A few days after Alexander surprised the Empress Mother by the question whether she had a Bible. She could only give him a French translation, not of the original, but of the Vulgate, but the Emperor buried himself in the Sacred Writing, and ever after in the midst of the storms of the time returned to it. Till then he had not gone beyond a gentle benevolent spirit of toleration which embraced all confessions without entering into particulars of dogma; but now in the mood in which he lived the Gospel, which for the first time he came into close contact with, took hold of him with great power, and he began to lean like his friend Galitzin to a kind of Protestant mysticism.

All these views alike, so far as they concern Stein's influence upon Alexander, rest rather upon an estimate of probabilities than upon positive evidence. The only witness who could speak with certain knowledge, Alexander himself, is silent. Stein could no doubt form a good conjecture of the extent of his own influence, and if he had said or even hinted that he believed his advice just at

this crisis to have had decisive weight, I from my knowledge of his veracity and remarkable freedom from vanity should implicitly believe him. But though in describing a somewhat later phase of the contest, when the question for Alexander was whether after the retreat of Napoleon he should march into Germany, Stein does seem to hint that he believed his advice to have been influential, he does not write in this tone about the critical moment which followed the fall of Moscow. His words are as follows :

The progress of the French produced a secret disquiet in St Petersburg; though an attempt was made to cheer the public mind by a pompous announcement of a victory at Borodino in the Church of Kazan; but it was a battle lost for the Russians, though fought with equal gallantry and great loss on both sides.

As nothing was heard of the army for ten days and the evacuation of Moscow was known, anxiety increased, and with it hatred of foreigners, threats against them and suspicion of treason. Many of the Emperor's counsellors, for instance, Count Araktcheieff, advocated peace. Everything was prepared for a journey of the Emperor's family to Olonecz; but when at last news came of the existence of the army and its retreat to Kaluga, courage revived, the formation of a Militia went forward, reports of the plunderings of the French, the burning of Moscow, the inaction of the enemy's army, the zeal with which the peasantry took arms, all this increased and embittered the wish for revenge and martial ardour in all classes, and every loss suffered by plunder or fire was a matter of pride.

This passage certainly supports Bernhardt's view that the Czar's firmness was caused by the influence rather of public opinion than of any individual, and that the very same causes which made him weak at Tilsit made him strong after the fall of Moscow. It does not appear that Stein knows of any moment

of peculiar trial and difficulty to Alexander, or of any great exertion of individual will which he was called upon to make just at that crisis. In his mind it is rather the nation than the Czar that resolves to continue the struggle.

My impression is that the time of Stein's great influence over Alexander did not begin till somewhat later. Stein was his adviser in German affairs; as soon therefore as the complete failure of the invasion was known, and the question arose whether Russia should be satisfied with the evacuation of her territory by the enemy or should pursue him into Germany, the advice of a German statesman became all-important, and when the advance into Germany was determined on, and still more after it had been executed, such advice became more and more indispensable. But in the earlier period his influence seems to have been on the whole confined to matters which were then of secondary importance.

It received however an extension. Stein was skilled, not only in German affairs, but also in finance, and the Emperor signified to him, through Armfeld, his desire that he should report on a scheme which the Genevese financier D'Ivernois had presented for reducing the extravagant paper currency of the country. I shall not lead the reader into the mysterious and pregnant subject of Russian finance. Suffice it to say that Stein declared that though he had an opinion upon the general principles on which the scheme was founded he could not, as a foreigner, judge of its applicability to Russia, and that for this reason he urgently recom-

mended the formation of a Commission to investigate the subject. The Commission was formed, and Stein was made a member of it. Before this Commission he laid a Memoir unfavourable to the scheme, which was ultimately condemned by the Commission.

Meanwhile occurred one of the strangest and most momentous transitions in the history of the world. It had been prophesied that Russia could not successfully resist Napoleon's attack, even when a much less overwhelming invasion had been contemplated than had now taken place. And those prophecies had come true. The Russians had given up one position after another, had been defeated in the field, and finally had lost their capital. Only one anticipation had remained unrealised. The Russians had refused to acknowledge themselves vanquished by signing a treaty of peace. Their armies still kept the field, and a Landwehr had been set on foot. So far Napoleon's success had fallen short of his expectation, as it had done before in Spain, where he had likewise been unable to quell the national resistance. It was possible that this obstinacy might so far embarrass Napoleon as to oblige him to give up the capital again, to repass Smolensk, and continue the war in a position nearer to his own frontier. But as this frontier was not, as we are apt to imagine, the frontier of France, but that of Prussia and the Duchy of Warsaw, his position with respect to the enemy would still be one of enormous superiority. That he would remain at Moscow too long and expose his army to a Russian winter, which might no doubt cause him

serious losses, was surely not to be imagined. A leader of his experience would be in no danger of such a miscalculation, and even a leader accustomed to strokes of audacity would, when responsible for so vast an army, be awed into prudence. And thus the firmness of the Russian Czar and nation might be expected only to prolong the war, to give Napoleon such a check as he had received in Spain, to compel him to adopt other means for quelling their resistance, but by no means to cause him any serious disaster, much less such a disaster as might shake the whole fabric of his power.

It would carry us far into the history of France if we should try to explain how it could have happened that such vast destinies should depend upon the clearness of judgment of a single man, so that a fit of rashness and eccentricity in Napoleon should change the face of the world and doom millions to death. It is a less intricate question how Napoleon could be capable of making the mistake he made at Moscow. We are to consider that the course he took *might* have been completely successful. Alexander's firmness might have yielded after a little delay to the clamours of his brother and the entreaties of his mother. Nothing is more characteristic of Napoleon than his vivid conception of the character of those with whom he had to deal. We may imagine that in his mind it was registered as a certainty that Alexander *could* not be firm. No doubt another general would not have dreamed of staking the existence even of an ordinary army upon the soundness of an impression of this kind. But Napoleon would not have been what he was

if he had not over and over again risked everything to obtain a result that could not be gained by ordinary methods. Such a calculation as he now acted upon had succeeded with him many times before. He ought indeed to have known that he was not exempt from failure. His Egyptian failure and his blunder in Spain must have cost him many moments of secret chagrin, but the world had been so blind to all this ill-luck and had so steadily persisted in regarding him as invincible that he may well have come to believe himself so. Meanwhile the scale of his affairs had become so gigantic that a single exception to his usual good fortune might have infinite consequences; the slightest aberration in his mind might be represented by the complete transformation of Europe, just as the infinitesimal displacement of a telescope will make a difference of millions of miles in an astronomical calculation.

Thus to explain the largest and most sudden reverse of fortune that the world ever saw we have to put together three conditions each unprecedented. First, the course of French history from Louis XIV. through the Revolution to Napoleon, had produced an intense autocracy, unparalleled in the history of civilised States; secondly, this autocracy was wielded by one who, by a very peculiar course of life, had been trained to hazardous strokes of policy and strategy, such as are altogether forbidden to ordinary rulers; thirdly, its affairs were on an unprecedented scale of magnitude.

To Stein the surprise must have been great. He had witnessed in 1809 the triumph of Napoleon when all chances seemed to be against him, a

triumph so complete that it left no prospect to his enemies. In 1812 all chances seemed to be in his favour, and the event seemed to have already confirmed the presage founded on probabilities, when owing to no unforeseen mishap, but simply to unwise irresolution and delay, he was overtaken by such a calamity as had tamed the pride of Sennacherib and Xerxes in old time. In September Stein had regarded himself as desperately defending the last stronghold of civilisation, as fighting in the forlorn hope of liberty against a tyranny far greater than that which had proscribed him in 1808. In November all was changed; the incubus was lifted off. Stein could feel that he was on the winning side, and could think of the fall of Napoleon as an event not improbably at hand. He could reasonably expect restoration to his country and a tranquil old age for himself, and for Germany the beginning of a better time. This indeed would certainly not be realised without a terrible contest, but that it might be realised was now not merely a religious faith, but a statesman's calculation.

He expresses his first fresh feeling of happiness 'with gravity and simplicity' in this letter to his wife, dated Nov. 8th, or two days before Napoleon in his retreat reached Smolensk.

The splendid condition of the affairs of this land, which we owe to the energy of the people, the gallantry of the army, the infatuation of the great criminal (observe, not to the heroism of Alexander), secures us in this capital the most complete rest, and allows us to form the most flattering hopes of the return of a legitimate and happy state of things in our native country, and of reunion with our families. You feel, my dearest, how sweet and consoling it is to give oneself to such hopes and see a condition of

repose follow the sufferings, persecutions and losses which have been accumulating for seven years, and to pass out of this situation *with honour and conscience clear*. I hope, my love, that you too will enjoy such happiness as you have deserved by your virtues, and by the courage with which you have endured so many privations and insults, and with which you have confronted the probability of a most troubled future.

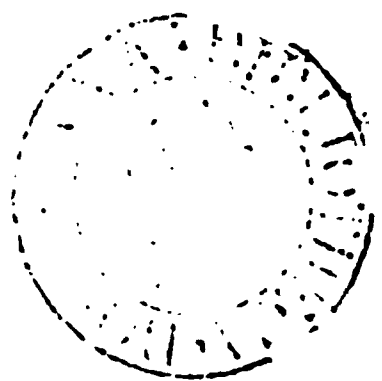


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